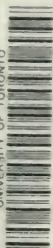


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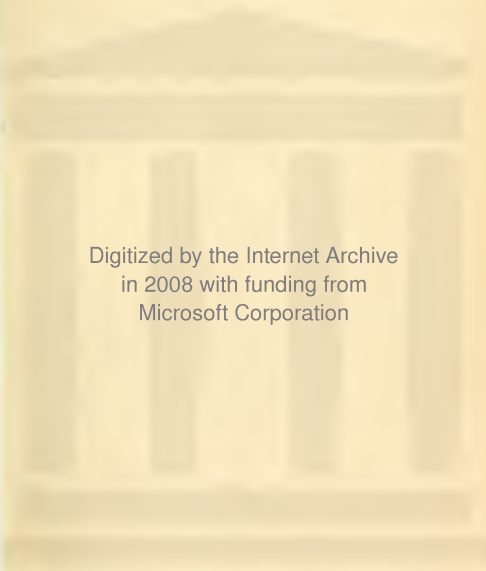
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NOTES

ON

Tennyson's Coming and Passing
... of Arthur ...

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Edited by P. LYDDON-ROBERTS, A.C.P., etc., and
Professor E. E. DENNEY.

NOTES

ON

**Jennyson's Coming and
Passing of Arthur.**

BY

W. RAYBOULD, B.A. (Lond.),

Lecturer at P.T. Centre.

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NOTES

ON THE

Coming and Passing of Arthur.

LIFE OF TENNYSON, 1809—1892.

ALFRED TENNYSON was born on August 6th, 1809, at Somersby, in Lincolnshire, a tiny village "in a pretty pastoral district of softly sloping hills and large ash trees."

His father, Dr. Tennyson, Rector of Somersby, was a man of tall, stately figure, a linguist, and something of a poet, artist, and musician. His mother, daughter of the Rev. Stephen Fytche, Vicar of Louth, was a sweet and gracious lady, full of kindness and sympathy.

Alfred was one of twelve children, seven of them sons, three of whom—Frederick, Charles, and Alfred—became poets. Their home life was singularly happy. The family was closely knit by affection and by common intellectual tastes. Story-telling, verse-making, imaginative games, were the favourite amusements of the boys from an early age.

Alfred's first schooling was got at a village school in a glen near the rectory. At the tender age of seven he left home for Louth, where, while living with his grandmother, he attended the Grammar School for four years. After this he returned to Somersby, where his education was continued for the next eight years after a desultory fashion. A good deal of his time was given to poetry, especially Byron's; a good deal spent in long rambles with his brothers over the hills into the fens and as far as the sea. The life of this period must have been largely the source of that rich fund of nature-knowledge from which he drew so liberally for his work of later years.

In 1827 Charles and Alfred made their first public essay in poetry with *Poems by Two Brothers*, published by a Louth bookseller. The poems, mainly echoes of Byron, failed to attract public attention, though they served their immediate purpose, so it is said, in

providing the authors with pocket-money to make a tour of the Lincolnshire churches.

The next year Charles and Alfred went up to Cambridge, whither their elder brother, Frederick, had preceded them in 1827. Though both were shy and unused to men's society, they were not long in making acquaintance with some of the most thoughtful and able men then in residence. Alfred joined "The Apostles," a debating society small in numbers but rich in intellect. Its chief members were Trench, afterwards Archbishop of Dublin; Merivale, the historian Dean of Ely; Richard Monckton Milnes, afterwards Lord Houghton; F. D. Maurice, James Spedding, and Arthur Hallam, Tennyson's especial friend, a young man of remarkable ability.

During Tennyson's first year he wrote *The Lover's Tale*. It was printed in 1833 and withdrawn almost at once. Fifty years later the poet issued it in a revised form, with a third part added. His first notable success occurred in 1829, when he gained the Chancellor's gold medal with a poem on Timbuctoo, the subject set for the competition. It was warmly admired by his friends, more particularly by Hallam and Milnes, who had been among the competitors.

In 1830 Tennyson appealed to a wider public with *Poems, chiefly Lyrical*. It received a measure of compliment from Coleridge and John Stuart Mill, and a highly appreciative review from Hallam. The latter roused the ire of Christopher North, and he poured ridicule in *Blackwood's Magazine* both on reviewer and poet.

The following year was saddened by the loss of Dr. Tennyson. Tennyson left Cambridge for good and returned to Somersby, where the family remained for several years. Here Tennyson was joined by Hallam, who had strengthened the ties of friendship by an engagement with one of the poet's sisters.

Tennyson's next venture, in 1833, was more ambitious. The volume contained, among other poems, *The Lady of Shalott*, *Enone*, *The Lotos Eaters*, and *The Palace of Art*. Coleridge gave it a modicum of praise, but condemned it for irregularity in metre. The *Quarterly Review*—notorious for its attack on Keats—showed Tennyson no mercy, and its excessive strictures so wounded his sensitive spirit that for nine years he abstained from publication, though all the time he was busy either recasting the old or "building" new poetry.

Arthur Hallam's sudden death in 1833 caused the poet intense grief, and cast a gloom over the Tennyson family. From all

accounts Hallam was of rare nature and extraordinary promise. Tennyson later said he was "as near perfection as mortal man can be."

Soon after Tennyson went to London to work at literature. His retiring nature prevented him from making many acquaintances, but his circle of friends, if small, was select. They were mainly fellow-members of the Anonymous Club, a select society of philosophers and literary men. Chief among these intellectual giants were Carlyle, John Stuart Mill, Thackeray, Landor, and Forster. The time not given to social intercourse was spent by Tennyson in writing and in country excursions.

Early in 1842 his long silence was broken by the issue of two volumes containing new and old poems. The new included *Locksley Hall*, *Morte d'Arthur*, *Sir Lancelot*, and *Queen Guinevere*. These were received with a chorus of praise, even the *Quarterly* adding its note. Success was largely due to the need of the time for a new poet to reflect its spirit—a spirit of faith issuing from a struggle with doubt and religious scepticism. This was Tennyson's spirit, and, further, his poetry possessed something of the passion of Byron and Shelley without their license, and the innocence of Wordsworth; hence it was especially grateful to an age eager for something new. Tennyson's reputation was now assured, and the promise of his work justified Sir Robert Peel's grant, in 1845, of a pension of £200 a year to enable the poet to devote himself to literature.

The public expectation of something greater was disappointed when Tennyson's first long poem, *The Princess*, appeared in 1847, and the general opinion was that much beautiful poetry had been wasted on a fantastic and unworthy subject. Yet in treating such a topic—the position of woman—the poet first showed himself, to some extent, the interpreter of the thought of his time.

1850 was an *annus mirabilis* in Tennyson's career. In June *In Memoriam* appeared; a few days later the poet married Miss Emily Sellwood, of Horncastle; in November he followed Wordsworth as Poet Laureate.

In Memoriam, one of the few great English elegies, was a tribute to his old friend, Arthur Hallam. It ranks with *Lycidas* and, curiously enough, resembles it in the source of inspiration, both poems being dedicated to young men whose noble promise had not had time to bear fruit in performance. Charles Kingsley called it the "noblest Christian poem which England has produced for two

centuries," and asserted that it showed Tennyson "as the willing and deliberate champion of vital Christianity and an orthodoxy the more sincere because it has worked upward through the abyss of doubt."

After his marriage at Shiplake, Tennyson set up housekeeping at Twickenham, but soon after he and his wife went abroad and wandered happily "in lands of palm and southern pine" until their return to Twickenham in 1852. The next year the family, now increased to three, moved to Farringford, in the Isle of Wight. Here, or at Aldworth, in Surrey (an estate bought some years later), the poet spent the happy years of his long married life.

Maud, a monodrama published in 1855, gave a set-back to the poet's popularity, chiefly by its advocacy of war as "a beneficial escape for fierce humours which turn human life into a fever when they are pent up and accumulative." Tradition credits Tennyson with a preference for *Maud* as the best thing he had ever written.

From 1857 to 1872 the *Idylls of the King* were his chief work. Still many short poems were written in this period as well as one of some length, *Enoch Arden* (1864).

In 1875 Tennyson broke new ground with the historical play, *Queen Mary*. This was followed by *Harold*, 1877; *Becket*, 1878; *The Falcon*, 1879; *The Cup*, 1881; *The Promise of May*, 1882; and after a long interval *The Foresters*, 1892. All were played except *Harold*, which was not written for stage representation. *Becket* in England, with Mr. Irving as the prelate, and *The Foresters* in America, had a considerable measure of success. On the whole, though containing much fine poetry, noble thoughts, and careful study of characters, the plays are considered to show a lack of dramatic instinct, a deficiency in the grouping of characters and the arrangement of scenes that prevents the concentration of interest and the intensity of purpose necessary to a dramatic conclusion. *Becket* is usually admitted to be the best constructed in point of view of stagecraft.

Up to the time of his death, the poet's literary activity never ceased. Each year saw the issue of new poems or of new editions of old ones, revised and altered with a fine severity of self-criticism; for Tennyson, though highly resentful of external criticism, unless appreciative, was far from being an indulgent critic of himself. A comparison of the first form with the present form of many of his earlier poems would show the wonderful care taken to remove imperfections and to add the touches that achieve perfection.

In 1884 the poet was made Baron Tennyson of Aldworth and Farringford, taking his title from the two beautiful homes endeared to him by a happy home life. Here he had lived "far from the madding crowd," but not out of touch with the higher life of the nation. His visitors included men of high mark in various activities of life of other nations as well as of his own. At times, too, the poet himself ventured forth into the world to mingle with the leaders of thought.

His later poems, save a few of sombre cast, such as *Vastness* and several others, the product probably of a stray mood, teach a lesson of hope and show a spirit free from doubt of the ultimate end of the eternal struggle between good and evil. To the end he preserved his skill in the subtle variations of metre, and the music of his utterance is full and perfect in the *Silent Voices*, dictated as he lay on his deathbed.

He died at Aldworth, October 6th, 1892, and was buried in Westminster Abbey.

ESTIMATE OF TENNYSON.

The Man.—Carlyle's description of his "soul's brother."—"A great shock of rough dusty-dark hair; bright laughing hazel eyes; massive aquiline face, most massive yet most delicate; of sallow brown complexion, almost Indian-looking; clothes cynically loose, free and easy; smokes infinite tobacco. His voice is musically metallic—fit for loud laughter and metallic wail and all that may lie between; speech and speculation free and plenteous."

Edward Fitzgerald, at one time a close companion of the poet, says:—"The more I have seen of him, the more cause I have to think him great." Fitzgerald found himself depressed "by the overshadowing of a so much more lofty intellect" than his own, "a universality of mind" which made him feel his own "dwarfishness."

"All that is seemly, gracious, and refined in the life of the English gentry and the English Church was gathered up in the stock from which he sprung and enfolded the home of his early years. The same influences were round him at the university, where he lived in an atmosphere of noble memories and liberal thought, amid a group of kindred spirits with kindred tastes. In the after years he held aloof from the town with its clamour of jostling life and jarring views, but this from no lack of sympathy with the higher mind of the nation."—MACCALLUM.

"An entirely false impression is abroad that the poet was a man of few friendships, that he was a gruff recluse of cold and forbidding

manners. . . . It is true that the poet had a scorn for the idle and vulgar curiosity of the masses ; but the whole history of his life testifies to the fact that he was a most sincere though properly discriminating companion and friend. His nature was capable of the most intense affection. . . . Throughout his long life the poet was always surrounded by a circle of more than acquaintances and admirers. . . . Tennyson's soul went forth unto all that was worthy. . . . Thus a visitor like Dr. Wendell Holmes had no difficulty in penetrating the reserve in which the Laureate half-concealed himself ; and equally he was in spiritual accord, if not in physical contact, with a score of others whose labours and learning had won his praise. . . . Innumerable anecdotes might be adduced for the purpose of showing how genial and happy was the poet's intercourse with these brother-workers and kindred spirits."—J. CUMING WALTERS.

The Poet.—(a) *Simplicity*.—"The first characteristic of Tennyson's art—that is, of his shaping of the beauty which he saw in nature and humanity—was simplicity, and this came directly out of his character. The way in which he worked, his choice of subjects, his style were all the revelation of a character drawn on large and uncomplicated lines ; and in this sense, in the complete sincerity to his inner being of all he did and in the manner of its doing, he was simple in the truest sense of the word. Nothing was ever done for effect ; no subject in which he was not veritably involved was taken up. . . . The thing shaped was the legitimate child of natural thought and natural feeling."

(b) *Clearness*.—"His clearness is also contained in this simplicity—clearness in thought, in expression, and in representation of the outward world. . . . It is true that Tennyson never went down into the obscure and thorny depths of metaphysics and theology ; it is true that he did not attempt to express the more dreadful and involved passions of mankind. . . . But I think it was not from inability to try these subjects . . . but from deliberate choice not to write about that which he could not express with lucidity of thought and form. He determined to be clear. He chose plain and easy lines of thought in philosophy and theology, but he expressed them with art—that is, in beautiful form proceeding outwards from impassioned feeling. . . . For the most part he wrote of the everyday loves and duties of men and women ; . . . of the aspirations and trials which are common to all ages and all classes ; . . . but he made them new and surprising by the art which he added to them—by beauty of thought, tenderness of feeling, and exquisiteness of shaping."

(c) *Fidelity to Beauty*.—"Tennyson never forgot that the poet's work was to convince the world of love and beauty. . . . This sense of the relation the poet bears to mankind, this sense he has of his office and of the duty it imposes on him, was profoundly felt

by Tennyson, became a part of him as an artist, and was an element in every line he wrote. . . . With a few exceptions—poems of dissection and despair, like *Despair*, and worse still, *The Promise of May*, Tennyson was faithful through his whole life to beauty, writing always of what was worthy of love, of joy, of solemn or happy reverence; and by this, and in this sphere, was the steady artist. . . . I do not believe, and I cannot trace in one line of his poetry, that he ever wrote for the sake of money or place, or to catch the popular ear, or to win a transient praise. . . . Even the things he did as Poet Laureate, where, if ever, he might have been untrue to this, have no tinge of the world about them. . . . The Laureate Odes are more lessons to royal folk than celebrations of them."

(d) *Power*.—"On his natural gift of creating, and on his careful training of it I need not dwell, nor yet on his practice and love of the skilfulnesses of his art, of the careful study of words and their powers in verse, of his mingled strength and daintiness and weakness, of all that belongs to Form. . . . No one disputes that he touched excellence in them, or that he had the power of creation. But I maintain that all his technique was not for its own sake, but was first urged by his love of beauty."—STOPFORD BROOKE.

"Tennyson is endowed precisely in the points where Wordsworth wanted. There is no finer ear nor more command of the keys of language."—EMERSON.

But Clough, when advocating the claims of Wordsworth to the Laureateship, found in Tennyson a certain conscious straining after effect, a sensuous inclination to melody and a neglect of matter in the cultivation of manner.

After the publication of the volume of 1842, Wordsworth declared "He is decidedly the first of our living poets."

(e) *Spirit*.—"In perfect sincerity I regard Alfred Tennyson as the noblest poet that ever lived. I call him and I think him, the noblest of poets, not because the impressions he produces are at all times the most profound, not because the poetical excitement which he induces is at all times the most intense, but because it is at all times the most ethereal, in other words the most elevating and most pure. ✓ No poet is so little of the earth earthy."—EDGAR ALLAN POE.

"The basis of Tennyson's teaching was his respect for law. . . . ✓ In the workings of nature he traced everywhere the designs of God. . . . Tennyson had always a nobility of thought. His poetry was full of honour and reverence for everything pure and true."—E. J. MATHEW.

(f) *Relation to Nature*.—"Tennyson is a great student of Nature."—W. C. BRYANT.

‘At the root of most of his excellence lies his keen sense and exquisite enjoyment of every species of beauty. . . . His finely-tuned organisation seemed tremblingly alive to those more delicate shades and tones of external nature which are scarcely distinguished by obtuser sensibilities. Connected with this gift is his power of painting the appearances of the outer world . . . with an almost magic reality of detail. He shows us the landscape as it is seen by the actors in his poems and the features he exhibits are selected with relation to their dominant emotions.”—INGRAM.

“Like his great predecessor, Wordsworth, he was above and beyond all the lover of nature, knowing by instinct the wonder and beauty of tree and star . . . I believe it is a fact that nowhere among his multitude of allusions to nature in all her varying forms and emanations is there a single false statement. His word can always be accepted whether he simply name the colour of a leaf, the plumage of a bird, or the characteristic of a mountain.”—J. CUMING WALTERS.

Mr. Stopford Brooke notes in Tennyson’s dealing with Nature that he always couples descriptions of Nature with some human interest, hence his descriptions are concise and contain only essential features, so as not to overwhelm the human interest. With him Nature is the background of human passions and reflects their variety.

The Thinker.—In relation to the progress of society, Tennyson’s main subjects are patriotism, freedom, the position of woman, the sad condition of the poor, the place of commerce and science, and the future of the race. He also treats of war as the remedy for the evils of commercial selfishness. !

“There can be no doubt of Tennyson’s value for his own age. He had a wonderful gift for saying in noble verse what the more advanced thinkers of the time were thinking or had thought, and thus he popularised many fruitful ideas. So in *The Princess* he marked admirably the high level of contemporary judgment on woman’s claim to an enlarged sphere of freedom; so in many poems he gave fine utterance to the broad conception of evolution, and again in many others to the Imperialist idea. But the new truth of one age is apt to be the truism of the next, and Tennyson, as a thinker, stands a chance of growing obsolete.”—STEPHEN GWYNNE.

Mr. Stopford Brooke finds in Tennyson that one of the strongest foundations for his patriotism is reverence for the past, but in his poems *The Revenge, The Defence of Lucknow, The Charge of the Light Brigade*, etc., he prefers the warlike glories of England to the more glorious but fameless struggle of the people for liberty. Yet no one has dwelt to better purpose on the noble elements of English character and their history.

In the consideration of struggles for freedom his spirit is both conservative and insular. His main line is the preservation of the old against the new, his faith is in the freedom that "slowly broadens down from precedent to precedent," and he has no sympathy with wild fits of revolutionary passion, inspired though they be by oppression and misery, by noble aspirations. Respect for law and order, the quiet maturing of liberty, step by step, seemed to him the means of ensuring the permanent progress of society. Insisting thus on "self-reverence, self-knowledge, self-control," he despises the frantic enthusiasts who strive to move mountains with the "raw haste, half-sister to delay"; their frenzy is "the blind hysterics of the Celt" and the "red fool-fury of the Seine." Excepting sympathy shown in youth for Poland and in age for Montenegro, Tennyson's poetry shows little interest in the struggles of other nations. He fails to see the benefits derived by Europe and by England in particular from adoption of the best results of the French Revolution without undergoing the exhaustion and the injuries consequent on the mistakes made in attaining wider freedom. Love of humanity, the corollary to love of country, does not shine in Tennyson. This narrowness of sympathy, this unpoetic scorn for noble but ill-regulated effort, this leaning to tame and cautious progress, lower the note of beauty, of aspiration, of fire, and of passion in his poetry, lessen its use to the cause of freedom, and impair its permanent influence.

In *The Princess* he expresses admirably high views of woman's sphere of action, and approaches in this more nearly to present views in spite of the fact that the fifty years since the issue of the poem have seen many steps in woman's progress, and have furnished us with data that he did not possess.

The miseries of the poor do not touch him vitally. Indeed, he lived apart from the suffering world and knew little of it. He sees vaguely that unbridled competition in commerce is at the bottom of their evils and that science enthralled by commerce has increased them; yet his chief remedy is the slow and steady improvement of the present system by the fuller development of science, coupled with extension of commerce. As this system leads to organised selfishness, when its evils become intolerable, war, he thinks, is the cure, forgetting that war swells the profits of the capitalist and puts a keener edge on the misery of the poor.

THE ARTHURIAN STORY.

Celtic Origin.—The Arthur so often enshrined in poetry and prose is commonly identified with a British chief of the sixth century, leader of his countrymen against the invading English.

His exploits, proudly remembered by the British—both those of Wales and those who sought refuge in Brittany—were the subject of many legends, into which were woven Celtic myths of pagan times. Such at least was the opinion of Renan and Matthew Arnold. Both felt, after reading the collection of Welsh legends called the *Mabinogion*, that these mediæval stories concealed, under a Christian cloak, many traces of pagan beliefs. Possibly this incorporation, with the Arthurian legends, of elements which had long been part and parcel of Celtic imaginative life, elevated Arthur into a super-human hero, totally unlike the real Arthur, and thus qualified him to become the central figure in the romances of later times.

Nennius.—The first mention of Arthur, outside Welsh sources, is found in the *History of the Britons*, ascribed to Nennius. Nothing is known of this writer, but his work is assigned variously to the latter part of the eighth century or to the ninth century.

The scanty details given by Nennius, present Arthur as the war leader of the Britons victorious in twelve battles with the heathen through the might of the Lord. The same help enabled him to slay over nine hundred pagans with his own hand at Mt. Badon. A notable point is the association, thus early, of Arthur's name with some of the "wonders" of Britain, showing that popular imagination had already been at work on the memory of the hero.

Geoffrey of Monmouth.—About the year 1135, Geoffrey of Monmouth, a Welsh priest, opened up a new field of literature with his *History of the British Kings*. Geoffrey, according to his own statement, based his work on an ancient *History of Britain* brought from Brittany by Walter Calenius, Archdeacon of Oxford. This he translated into Latin, at first in four books. Subsequent additions had, by 1147, swelled the work to twelve books containing in the guise of history a mythical and romantic narration of the reigns of British kings from Brut, great-grandson of Æneas the Trojan, down to Cadwallo, who died in 689 A.D. Though Geoffrey's so-called history roused the wrath of the genuine chroniclers of his time, his account of Arthur seized the fancy of the romance writers both at home and abroad, and set directly and indirectly the fashion for romances based on the legends of Arthur.

Before the close of the twelfth century French metrical versions of Geoffrey's work had been done by Gaimar, a servant of an English baron of the North; by Wace, a clerk of Caen, who added new legends drawn from Brittany and the mention of the Round Table. Within the same period a soul was infused into the new subject of literature by the addition of a new legend, *The Quest of the Holy Grail*, ascribed by some to a Frenchman, Chrestien de Troyes, by others to Walter Map, a dignitary attached to the court of Henry II. The first Arthurian romance written in English appeared shortly after 1200 A.D., and was the work of an English monk, Layamon,

who took Wace's romance, amplified it, and gave it to his countrymen under the name of *The Brut*.

From this time onwards to the fifteenth century, the popularity of the Arthurian story manifested itself in a crowd of romances, prose and verse, dealing with Arthur or with personages connected with his career. The bulk of these at first were French and German, for though many romances were written in English, they did not appear in profusion until the third quarter of the fourteenth century.

Thus in the middle ages there had accumulated round the name of Arthur a cycle of romances comparable in mass to the famous cycle associated with Charlemagne, the great Frankish Emperor of the eighth century. In popularity the Arthurian cycle surpassed the Carolingian, since in addition to possessing the religious spirit that animated the latter, the Arthurian romances presented the chivalric elements of love, honour, and knightly adventures, which were absent from the Carolingian cycle. In this respect they harmonised with the knightly ideals of the middle ages: and further, they must have commended themselves by a charm of style and a variety that contrasted deeply with the monotonous repetitions of the older cycle.

Sir Thomas Malory.—In the fifteenth century, at the close of the middle ages, the great interest taken in the Arthurian romances impelled Sir Thomas Malory, a knight of whom little is known, to weld together in one work the main features of the mass of current romances. The result of his efforts was the *Morte d'Arthur*, finished in 1470, and printed by William Caxton in 1485. Caxton in his preface speaks of the many volumes in Welsh, French, and English on this subject, but since these are not available he has followed a copy taken by Sir Thomas Malory out of certain French books, with the intent that "noblemen may see and learn the noble acts of chivalry, the gentle and virtuous deeds that some knights used in those days, by which they came to honour, and how they that were vicious were punished."

As a mere compilation Malory's book would have done him credit, for the legion of romances extant, though possessing a certain unity of theme, differed widely in details, and were often contradictory in spirit. More is claimed for him however. Sir Edward Strachey claims for Malory "the vision and the faculty divine" of the poet, though "wanting the accomplishment of verse," calls his book an epic, and asserts that in the presentment of his subject he satisfies Milton's test for poetry, that it should be "simple, sensuous, and passionate."

Professor MacCallum notes that however closely Malory follows his sources, he shows independence and originality; further, he displays genius in his graphic narratives, his swift descriptions, as of the coming of the Grail, and in his appeals to the feelings.

Malory's art is shown in his selection from a huge block of material of the portions suitable for combination into a picturesque whole, and by his avoidance of those features of the romances, which, by reason of repulsiveness, would have destroyed artistic feeling. His main defects are contradiction in detail and confusion of arrangement and a partial failure to mould his material into a perfect whole.

In spite of its imperfections the *Morte d' Arthur* is a landmark in English literature. Many poets have drawn inspiration directly from it for works dealing with Arthurian episodes, and others have imbibed the spirit of its romance and infused it into their poetry. In some cases it is difficult to decide whether Geoffrey of Monmouth or Malory is entitled to the credit of inspiration, but it may be generally assumed that the two have gone hand in hand, the former serving for pseudo-historical, the latter for imaginative and romantic detail. Edmund Spenser, in introducing Arthur into his *Faerie Queene* as the perfect knight, borrows largely from Geoffrey, but his ideal of knighthood so transcends the moral tone of Geoffrey's work and is in such harmony with Malory's, that it cannot be doubted Spenser had come under the influence of the *Morte d' Arthur*. Milton confesses his youthful preference for romance, and at one time included King Arthur among the subjects he thought fit for the great work that was to seal his fame. Dryden, too, once contemplated an epic on either Arthur or the Black Prince, but as Scott puts it—

“a ribald King and Court
Bade him toil on to make them sport ;
Demanded for their niggard pay,
Fit for their souls, a looser lay.”

In Dryden's time, Richard Blackmore wrote *Epics on Prince Arthur and King Arthur* which, as Dennis the critic remarked, were neither admirable nor contemptible. It is impossible to chronicle the later writers who have handled the Arthurian story in greater or less degree, for the romantic revival of the 19th century, both at home and abroad, dealt lovingly and copiously with the ancient legends, sometimes contenting itself with reproducing their mediæval aspects or employing their romantic machinery, at other times refining their spirit and bringing them into relation with modern life. In England, Scott, Wordsworth, Lytton, Heber, Matthew Arnold, William Morris, Hawker, Swinburne, and Tennyson are the chief of those who have found attraction in the memories of the “gray king whose name, a ghost, streams like a cloud, man-shaped, from mountain peak.”

Alone of these, Tennyson has treated comprehensively the whole romance, and both in this respect and in his influence on other writers ranks with Geoffrey of Monmouth and Malory, as a landmark and a fountain-head of Arthurian literature.

His relation to these and his different treatment of the subject will be dealt with in the comments on *The Idylls of the King*.

THE IDYLLS OF THE KING.

Order of Issue.—The order of the Idylls in Tennyson's collected works is:—*Coming of Arthur, Gareth and Lynette, Marriage of Geraint, Geraint and Enid, Balin and Balan, Merlin and Vivien, Lancelot and Elaine, The Holy Grail, Pelleas and Ettarre, The Last Tournament, Guinevere, Passing of Arthur*. This is not the order of their appearance, and the poems in their final condition differ considerably, through their frequent revision by the poet, from the first editions. To note the order of their issue and to compare it with the final order is interesting, as showing how the poet's conception gradually expanded and how he linked together detached episodes into a series of poems united by a common thread of interest and each fulfilling its share of one great conception.

So early as 1832, Tennyson had touched the Arthurian story in the *Lady of Shalott*, the nucleus of the idyll of *Lancelot and Elaine*. After a virtual silence of ten years, there appeared in 1842 a volume containing the *Morte d'Arthur*, expanded later into *The Passing of Arthur*, together with the ride of *Lancelot and Guinevere* and *Sir Galahad*, the latter of which may be regarded as the first draft of *The Holy Grail*. 1859 saw the issue of the first four Idylls, *Geraint and Enid, Merlin and Vivien, Lancelot and Elaine, Guinevere*, connected merely by their association with Arthur and his court, but otherwise separate poems free from any trace of inclusion in one design. The independence of the separate Idylls was maintained till 1870, when the publication of *The Coming and The Passing of Arthur* indicated the scope of the poet's conception and the unity of his work. Several more links were added to the chain in *The Last Tournament*, 1871; *Gareth and Lynette*, 1872, and *Balin and Balan*, 1886.

The Holy Grail and *Pelleas and Ettarre* appeared in 1869. These, with the dedication to the memory of the Prince Consort (1862) and the *Envoy to the Queen*, 1872, constitute essentially the work as it now appears, though year by year, Tennyson subjected the poems to careful revision, improving the expression, removing discordances in detail, binding the Idylls closer by insertions sometimes of considerable length.

Title.—"Idyll" means a little picture and denotes a short poem, partly narrative, partly descriptive. In Greek literature the term was applied to poems treating mainly of the simple incidents of rural life. In Tennyson's work both personages and incidents are on a higher level than in the ordinary idylls. A further and greater difference exists in the unity of the series and the serious ethical purpose which is the main element of that unity. These important differences from the pastoral idyll have led some admirers of the poet to regard *The Idylls of the King* as a great Epic of Arthur. Inasmuch as they are narrative and cluster round one dominant

figure they may appear to deserve the title. On the other hand, Tennyson chose to call them *Idylls* as the more appropriate term, although probably he had the epic intention in writing them. Each idyll may be considered an epic in miniature, but taken together they have not the organic unity of the epic. They form rather a chain to which, as is shown by the order of their appearance, links may be added at the poet's option without injury to the symmetry of the whole.

In Mr. Brooke's opinion, another reason for refusing them the title of epic is that an essential in the epic is the hero's confidence in his work followed by his triumph over opposing fate. But Arthur ends in apparent failure, wavering between despondency and hope.

Relation to Malory.—Passages quoted in the notes show how closely in some cases Tennyson followed Malory. In fact, his frequent loans have led, in some quarters, to the charge of copyist, and to the complaint that Malory's story in his hands "loses its epic grandeur, and is broken up into a series of petty miniatures." As well might one call Shakespeare a copyist for his indebtedness to Holinshed and North's *Plutarch*. Tennyson differs often from Malory, even where he borrows from him. Compare, for example, Malory's—

"And there received him three queens with great mourning,"
with lines 366-7 in *The Passing of Arthur*—

"and from them rose

A cry that shiver'd to the tingling stars," etc.

Other examples could readily be quoted. Undoubtedly Tennyson is under great obligations to Malory for material, the "pomp and circumstance," and virtues of chivalry. As a set-off against these loans, Malory's simple narrative is often transformed into glowing pictures, everything is omitted that lessens the claim of Arthur to be a perfect knight, characters are developed and clothed afresh, and the inartistic jumble of Malory's tales is replaced by artistic sequence. In spirit the work of Tennyson is as far removed from Malory's as the latter's was from the spirit of the times when Arthur lived. Each writer brought his work closely into relation with his own age, and unless we concede that the ideals of to-day are not purer and more lofty than those of the fifteenth century, it must be granted that the atmosphere of the *Idylls* possesses a higher morality and nobility of tone. For instance, Malory relates without comment that Arthur, on learning from Merlin that among the children to be born on May Day was one who should destroy him, ordered the destruction of all born on that day. Again, in Malory, Arthur proposes to burn Guinevere for her sin, and to put Lancelot to a shameful death. Yet the sin does not seem to trouble him so much as the loss of a stout knight in Lancelot. Compare with these the farewell meeting of Arthur and Guinevere in *Guinevere* to see how widely Tennyson's Arthur differs from

Malory's, and what stress the modern poet places on the sanctity of marriage. *The Marriage of Geraint* and *Geraint and Enid* were taken from the *Mabinogion*, a collection of Welsh legends translated by Lady Charlotte Guest, 1837-1849.

The Allegory.—In the *Envoy to the Queen*, which rounds off the *Idylls*, Tennyson declares plainly the intent of his poem:—

"Accept this old imperfect tale,
New-old and shadowy, Sense at war with Soul,
Ideal manhood closed in real man,
Rather than that gray king, whose name, a ghost,
Streams like a cloud, man-shaped, from mountain peak,
And cleaves to cairn and cromlech still; or him
Of Geoffrey's book, or him of Malleor's, one
Touch'd by the adulterous finger of a time
That hover'd between war and wantonness,
And crownings and dethronements."

"His Arthur is not the Arthur of Celtic legend or of romantic history, or even of chivalrous romance, but he shadows and embodies the spiritual principle in conflict with the oppositions of sense. I say spiritual principle, for the word 'soul' is a little ambiguous. . . . The soul or spiritual principle of which he sings is little else than the ideal which governs the lives of men, the eternal pattern which they seek to realise. On the one hand, it is infinite and divine; but, on the other, since its realisation is in time, it must take shape according to the conditions of the time. In its various manifestations there is always something temporary and incomplete. Hence it discloses itself as an order that rises, flourishes, and passes away; it seems as though at its dissolution there were the wreck of all that is highest, but it is merely its transitory form that is broken; it incarnates itself anew in fuller and more adequate shape."—MACCALLUM.

"The old order changeth, yielding place to new,
And God fulfils Himself in many ways,
Lest one good custom should corrupt the world."

From Tennyson's remark, "By King Arthur I always meant the soul," it may be inferred that, from the outset, he had the idea of uniting the *Idylls* by making the treatment allegorical. Still the allegory was not patent in the *Morte d'Arthur* of 1842, nor in the *Idylls* of 1859. *The Holy Grail*, the most allegorical of all the *Idylls*, appeared in 1869, to be followed in 1870 by the volume containing *The Coming* and *The Passing of Arthur*. In this issue Tennyson indicated the order in which the *Idylls* were to be read. Later three more *Idylls* were inserted, and these were clearly written to the allegory outlined in the volume of 1870. The earliest *Idylls* appear to have undergone modification to render them more symbolical, yet the allegory in them is attenuated and, in the opinion of some critics, clashes with the tale.

Mr. Stopford Brooke compares Tennyson's treatment of allegory with the methods of Spenser and Bunyan. The latter started with the symbolical meaning and invented a tale to suit it. Tennyson inserted his conception into an old tale, hence he had to invent at times, consequently the allegory clashes with the tale. In the *Pilgrim's Progress* story and allegory are clear, vivid, and human, and neither is overpowered by the other. Tennyson's poem is not plainly a story, not plainly an allegory. Sometimes the men and women are real, sometimes shadows. Events are at one time human and romantic, then metaphysical—theology in a romantic dress. Bunyan got his perfection through natural simplicity and child-like imagination; Tennyson achieved comparative success through intellectual power. With him elaborate thinking took the place of creative emotion, and art has given place to the understanding. When the allegory is mixed with the story the poetry is disturbed and the tale is weak, *e.g.*, *Merlin and Vivien*. Mr. Brooke concludes that the allegory might have been left out and that the lesson to be taught might have been better taught through the actions of the characters as human beings.

Treatment of Arthur.—In presenting Arthur as faultless king and unblemished Christian hero, Tennyson was not conceiving him in an entirely new aspect. Rather he followed the line taken by his predecessors, but he refined, modified, and developed Arthur's character to suit his own conception and to avoid jarring with the spirit of his own time. So he omitted gross features and incidents, accepted by mediæval writers as not inconsistent with the chivalric ideal, and Arthur thus cleansed from every stain stands a shining spotless figure amid the general degradation of his knights. It should be noted however that in the romantic historians Arthur is the heroic figure in a conflict between Christianity and heathenism; in Malory and later mediæval romance, he is the ideal of chivalry wearing its highest virtues with but few defects, the flower of kings, and, as Caxton styles him, one of the nine worthies of the world, of whom three were Christian and Arthur first and chief of these.

Time taken.—Though the duration of the action has no importance in relation to the events, it may be of interest to gather the various hints of time scattered through the Idylls with the view of determining the probable length of Arthur's reign. In *Lancelot and Elaine* it is noted that for eight years Lancelot had won the diamond given by Arthur as the prize of the annual tournament, and that Arthur intended there should be nine tournaments to ascertain "which is our mightiest," and to encourage growth "in use of arms and manhood" for the purpose of driving out the heathen. In the same Idyll, the Lord of Astolat says the heathen sacked Astolat ten years before in the "dull days" prior to the ruin of their power on Badon Hill by Arthur. From the above it may be concluded that Arthur instituted the tournaments soon after his coronation, probably

the second year of his reign, since the first year would be well occupied after the May in which the wedding took place by wars with Rome and the heathen.

Up to the end of *Lancelot and Elaine*, then, some ten years have elapsed since the ninth joust is recorded, and Lancelot, severely wounded, lies at death's door for "many a night." *The Quest of the Grail* occupies another year; *Pellias and Ettarre* takes a few weeks, and *The Last Tournament* a few days. Then Modred's discovery without a doubt of the sin of Lancelot and Guinevere drives the latter to refuge at Almesbury, where she abode "many a week" before the coming of Arthur on his way to meet Modred in that last great battle in the west. In sum these events may be conjectured as covering twelve years.

The Coming of Arthur.—*Inner Meaning.*—The passages in which this inner meaning is most distinct are those describing:—Arthur's yearnings for union with Guinevere; the supernatural aid given in the great battle and the effect of the dreadful voice; Bleys' tale related by Bellicent; the coronation scene; Leodogran's dream; the marriage and the song of triumph.

Arthur is the soul coming mysteriously from heaven and washed as a babe into the hands of Merlin. The latter typifies the intellect which, commanding all human knowledge, is serviceable to the soul in its conflict with sense or the sensual appetites.

The soul arrives at a fit time. An old order of religion and culture has crumbled into decay. Anarchy is dominant, the evil passions of men are let loose and the resulting evils are heightened and increased by the attacks of the heathen. The soul then has to beat down these evils, to fell the rank growth that harbours the foes of man and to flood with light the "waste places of human nature" so that a finer growth may ensue, that law and order may resume their reign, and that a world dead in trespasses and sin may rise again and live, soul and sense harmoniously united and working together to fulfil God's will.

To secure a vantage position, the soul needs the aid of intellect just as Arthur's coronation was secured by Merlin. His advent, as is the case with all new ideals, arouses different feelings in different minds. Some—the lords—steeped in sensualism, regard him as "baseborn," and "no King" of theirs; others, spiritually inclined, think him "dropped from heaven," and a third class, typified by the bold Bedivere, practical and prosaic, welcome and follow him devotedly, unmoved by the intangible signs of a mystic origin and career.

The coronation scene is full of symbolism. The soul masters the higher faculties of man—the knights—and binds them, if but for a space, to his service. Faith, Hope, and Charity—three fair queens—bear smiling promise of help in case of need. Religion—The Lady

of the Lake—in its purity and power adds awful mystery to the scene. She has provided the Sword of the Spirit (Excalibur) wherewith to combat base appetite; its heavenly guidance—the dazzling jewels—and its bright light—the blinding blade—are a two-fold power that will ensure victory. The Lady knows a subtler magic than Merlin's, for religion has a deeper and stronger power over men's hearts than intellect can ever gain. She is undisturbed by the storms of life's sea, but can walk on the troubled waters to encourage and uphold.

To accomplish its mission perfectly, soul must be knit to heart, as Arthur to Guinevere, in noble marriage, so that living one life as one being, their ideal union may enable soul to appeal to the whole nature of man and give more power to raise it into full life. The bright hope springing from such a union is fitly symbolised by the glory of May. One slight but significant sign—the drooping eyes of Guinevere—denotes the inability of heart to comprehend and sympathise with the ethereal aims of soul.

Leodogran's dream forecasts the final triumph of soul. After fierce conflict with blasphemy and sensual appetite, these vanish to nothing, while the glory of the soul shines out for ever in the heavens.

Gareth and Lynette.—This idyll shows the palmy days of Arthur's rule when the Order was fulfilling gloriously the sacred vows sworn to the King, and Arthur was besieged by applicants beseeching aid against oppressors, and by aspirants eager to qualify for the Round Table. Gareth is the type of these youthful aspirants, ambitious of noble deeds, yet willing to serve unknown as a kitchen menial in Arthur's palace, if only he may behold the glory of Arthur's court. Disciplined in spirit by constant obedience, chastened in desire by the King's schooling, he undertakes a dangerous quest and perseveres to the end with no hope of personal glory, but for the sake of the deed and his oath. He combats with knights who symbolise the various natural impulses that beset human nature on the way from youth to old age, and his rescue of the beautiful captive from Castle Perilous is a type of the deliverance of the soul from subjection to the flesh.

The following Idylls depict the gradual declension of the knights of the Round Table from high purpose and sinless life to a state of moral degradation. Two causes are responsible for the degeneration. The prime cause is the sin of Lancelot and Guinevere, sin which in them does not entirely destroy nobility of character, and which looks less black because of their great love and constant faithfulness. But this sin in high places leavens almost the whole Order. It initiates and licenses in knights less noble than Lancelot, a slackening of devotion to noble living and speeds them on a downward path of lustful desire, scorn of truth in love to a slough of sensual pleasure.

In the **Marriage of Geraint and Enid** the baleful example of Lancelot and Guinevere begins to work. Geraint, hearing rumours of the queen's infidelity, grows suspicious of Enid and retires with her from Arthur's court. Once away, suspicion dies, but his love for Enid makes him forget his knightly vows and duties till men jeer at him as a prince "whose manhood is all gone." Enid's sadness at her lord's degeneracy awakens Geraint's suspicion and jealousy, and these feelings lead him to treat her in most unknightly fashion.

Balin and Balan are two brothers who kill each other unwittingly. This calamity is directly traceable to Guinevere's sin, though in part due to the failing of Balin, an evil temper that had previously procured him exile from the court.

On return from exile he tried to restrain the temper that was ruining his soul by taking for guide Guinevere as a model of purity, and Lancelot as a model of knighthood. An accidental discovery of their guilt shattered his faith and drove him mad with rage. While in this mood, fortune brought him into conflict with Balan, each thinking the other to be an evil knight whom Balan had been charged to kill. Balin's mistake was in not seeing the superiority of Arthur as a model.

In **Merlin and Vivien**, Merlin seduced by Vivien typifies Intellect lacking moral strength seduced by fleshly lusts. Vivien is the incarnation of lust. In *Balin and Balan* she sows slander and impurity, then enters Arthur's court in deceitful guise and leaves it "as an enemy that has left death in the living waters." Merlin, though seeing through her wiles, is weak enough to yield and loses his "use, name, and fame."

Lancelot and Elaine.—Elaine, the lily maid of Astolat, the type of unconscious innocence as Vivien is the type of conscious guilt, loves Lancelot, but he, bound by disloyal passion, cannot return her love. So the lily fades and dies and with her goes Lancelot's chance of casting off the fetters of that guilty love that "had marred his face" and that "drove him into wastes and solitudes for agony."

The Holy Grail.—The quest of the Holy Grail, the cup used at the Lord's Supper, was the secondary cause of the dissolution of the Order. Brought into Britain by Joseph of Arimathea, it was placed at Glastonbury, and healed the ills of all who touched and saw it. But the times grew evil and the cup was caught away to Heaven. It reappeared to Percival's sister, a holy nun, as a rose-red cup with beatings in it as if alive, at the time when the ardent enthusiasm of the Order for the ideal smitten into them by Arthur has declined and the plague spot of sin has infected their spiritual life. The Grail appears covered to the knights in Arthur's absence, and all swear to seek for it a year and a day with the hope of seeing it uncovered. Arthur is grieved that they should forsake the duty

that lies nearest to their hands to follow "wandering fires lost in the quagmire." Vows are sacred, so they must go even though Arthur foresees ruin to the Order from this Quest. Only a tithe of them return, wasted and worn, and not all of them have seen the Grail.

The Quest signifies the reaction against evil that commonly occurs when men are conscious of defection from the ideal that has hitherto governed their actions. Shame that the "good custom" they have followed should be corrupted moves them to frenzied efforts to remodel their lives and restore their ideal with enhanced purity. Such was the feeling of the knights. The Quest, however, led them away from their work in the world, set them in an ascetic, super-sensual course of life, for which most of them were utterly unfitted. Nothing but failure was possible, and the remnant, finding at their return that Camelot had been ruined through lack of defenders, sank deeper into the mire of sensualism than before.

Pelleas and Ettarre.—The impossibility of regenerating the Order is seen in the effect of this corrupt society on Pelleas, a new knight. Like Gareth he is full of noble impulses, fired with devotion to Arthur, and in happier times might have had Gareth's success.

Disillusion mocks him at every turn; what seems most fair proves to be most false, and he is deceived where he most trusted. Wrath, like a devouring fire, drives him "to lash the treasons of the Table Round," and "blaze the crime of Lancelot and the Queen." Foiled by Lancelot, he disappears into the dark, hopeless and mad.

The Last Tournament.—In this idyll the triumph of Sense is complete. Arthur is absent from this last joust and Lancelot takes his place as judge. He notes in silence the breaking of the tourney rules, fumes inwardly at the craven reluctance of the knights to fight for the fame of their ladies, and groans that the glory of the Round Table is no more. The prize which Guinevere hoped might fall to the purest knight is won by Tristram, the airy advocate of free love, who regards the sacred vows of knighthood as the "wholesome madness of an hour" and laughs cynically at their inefficacy to bind such a child of nature as himself. The revels of graceless mirth that follow the joust sadden Guinevere and cause her to break up the sports betimes. Arthur returns to find his home deserted by Guinevere and none left of his court save his poor faithful fool.

Guinevere.—Here the shameless disregard of the knights for the king's vows passes into open defiance. Modred, the traitor, raises the standard of revolt and joins to himself the heathen Saxons. Arthur, recalled from warring with Lancelot, moves to the west with a faithful few to crush the recreant knights and their pagan allies. On his way he visits the convent at Almesbury, whither Guinevere had fled after Modred's public exposure of her guilt. From this last meeting with the penitent Guinevere Arthur passes to his doom.

The Passing of Arthur.—This, with *The Coming*, forms the framework for the other *Idylls*. In its original form as the *Morte d'Arthur*, published in 1842, it included lines 170-440 of the present poem. In a small introductory poem, styled *The Epic*, the author tells us that the *Morte d'Arthur* is the remaining fragment of an epic, and that the rest of the twelve books he had burnt from dissatisfaction with them.

It is difficult to say how much allegory is hidden in this poem. The scene and the circumstances of the final conflict all are ominous of the failure of Soul; though Sense, in the form of Modred and his allies, is struck down by Soul, yet the wreck of the Table Round, the blasting of Arthur's hopes and trust, his inability to discern the ways of God to man, his doubt and despondency, the relapse of his realm "into the beast," seem to show the utter inefficacy of his work. On the other hand, the King vanishes into light and is received with such shouts of joy in heaven as welcome "a king returning from his wars." Ought we not then to accept the lines—

{ The old order changeth, yielding place to new,
And God fulfils Himself in many ways,
Lest one good custom should corrupt the world,"

as containing the moral of the poem? Then the passing of Arthur may seem the conclusion of one phase of the eternal conflict between good and evil—a conflict to be resumed when the Soul reappears, a new sun bringing a new year. ✓

STYLE OF THE IDYLLS.

Style.—"Even the *Idylls*, where a certain mediocrity of temperament seems to underlie the superb diction, may probably retain their place as masterpieces of style. They suggest inevitably a parallel with Spenser by their high-wrought workmanship, their somewhat languid grace, and by that fine sense of the romantic value of landscape which informs them. . . . He wrote an English which became for his own day the standard of poetic diction. And in the *Idylls*, as in all that he wrote, he wielded a verse always harmonious and wonderfully capable, when he chose, of sense-suggestion."—Gwynne.

"The tone of the *Idylls* is one of unreality. They are neither pictures of modern life nor of mediæval. The charm of the verse is in its richness of colour and unique melody. The incidental lyrics are perfect. Tennyson's verse is famous for its clearness of expression, and for the sense of music which governs every line."—E. J. MATHew.

"To me Tennyson shows more than any poet I know (perhaps has been a warning to me) how much there is in finest verbalism. There is such a latent charm in mere words, cunning collocations, and in the voice ringing them . . . as in the line, 'And hollow, hollow, hollow all delight,' in *The Passing of Arthur*. . . . His mannerism is great, but it is a noble and welcome mannerism. . . . His very best work to me is contained in the books of *The Idylls of the King*."—WALT WHITMAN.

Mr. Stopford Brooke considers that the blank verse of the Idylls belongs to his central period, is of almost equal excellence throughout, and superior to the blank verse of his old age and his dramas. As a vehicle of thought or emotion it is entirely at his command. It has at his choice ease and rapidity or slow stateliness; it echoes the scene, thought, or thing. By turns it is loud or low, soft or rough, fluid or rigid, abrupt, delayed, smooth, weighty, or light. The poet knows all the devices of caesura and accent. His consciousness is so great that at times it becomes baldness; his verse often lacks rush, is always a little too academic, and gives rise to the feeling that the obvious skill and care have reduced its naturalness. At its best, as in *The Passing of Arthur*, it has the nobility of a full-fed river.

Mrs. Ritchie, in her records of Tennyson, narrates that the poet declared that the first and last Idylls were intentionally more archaic than the others.

METRE OF THE IDYLLS.

(Metre).—Metre in English poetry consists of the regular recurrence of accented syllables and the kinds of metre are determined by the number of accented syllables in each verse (line). The Idylls are written in the metre usually employed in epic poetry, *viz.*, unrhymed Iambic Pentameter.

Pentameter signifies that there are five feet in each line and Iambic denotes that each foot consists of two syllables, the latter of which is accented, *e.g.*, *away*. Such a group of syllables is called an Iambus, a term borrowed from Greek Prosody where, however, it meant a foot consisting of a short syllable followed by a long one.

When applied to English metres, the term Iambus cannot be taken in its original sense, since English poetry relies for its rhythm on the stresses placed on syllables and takes no heed of their length.

Scansion.—To scan a verse is to divide it into feet, marking the accented syllable of each foot. The following hints may be found useful:—

(1) In words of two syllables and more, the poet follows the accentuation of ordinary pronunciation.

(2) Every dissyllabic word must have one and only one accented syllable, *e.g.*, *húppy*, *unblíst*.

(3) Trisyllabic words accented on the first syllable have also a secondary or slighter accent on the third, *e.g.*, *history*. When the middle syllable is accented, neither of the others is accented, *e.g.*, *uphéaven*.

(4) If a foot consists of two monosyllables, that which has the greater importance with reference to the force of the line is the accented syllable.

Normal lines:—

' But heard | the cáll | and came | but Gúm | evere.'
' Then rose | the King | and móved | his host | by night.'

(5) As the repetition of stresses having the same force would become tedious, relief is given by the intermingling of slight stresses placed on such less important words as prepositions, etc.

e.g. ' Far oth | er is | this bát | tle in | the west.'
' Hath fold | ed in | the páss | es of | the world.'

(6) There must be at least five accented syllables in the line.

Variations.—In addition to the use of slight stresses, other devices to vary the rhythm are the use of the trochee, a foot the reverse of the Iambus, *e.g.*, *happy*, and the introduction of extra syllables which may be slurred over or elided in pronunciation. But a great deal of the beauty of the rhythm depends on the skill shown by the poet in his management of the position of natural pauses in the sense, such as are marked by a semi-colon or a full stop.

(1) When a trochee is used, it either begins a line or follows a pause in the line. A slight pause, as marked by a comma, is enough to justify the use of a trochee.

e.g. ' Gúme | vere and | in hér | his one | delight.'
' Smite on | the súd | den yet | rode ón | and pitch'd.'
' Dóubted | and drówsed | noddéd | and slépt | and sáw.'

2) Spondee.—Occasionally, but rarely, a foot may consist of two syllables with equal or nearly equal stresses. Such a foot is termed a spondee and occurs commonly in compound words or when a word is repeated.

' Mutt'ring | and mür | m'ring at | his ear | Quick, quick.'
' Shield-break | ings and | the clásh | of brands | the crásh.'

(3) Elision.—(a) *i* or *y* followed by a vowel counts as a consonant:—

' For mán | y a pet | ty king | ere Arth | ur came.'
' Cláudias | and Clár | iance of | Northúm | berlánd.'

(b) *-ing* elided:—

' Sent to | him sáy(ing) | Aríse | and help | us thou.'

(c) *e* elided:—

‘Of súbt | lest jéw | ell’rý | He gázed | so lóng.’
 ‘A lánd | of óld | upheáv | en fróm | th’ abýss.’

(4) *Pauses*.—These may occur in the middle of a foot. The term ‘caesura’ is sometimes used to denote such pauses. Tennyson exhibits every variety of pause. The following examples show pauses after the 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, and 5th syllables:—

‘Shrill’d; but in going mingled with dim cries.’
 ‘Before. His own thought drove him like a goad.’
 ‘The heathen; after, slew the beast and fell’d.’
 ‘Victor and lord. But were I join’d with her.’
 ‘Others of Anton? Tell me ye yourselves.’

Alliteration.—This is the repetition of a letter, commonly a consonant, in words occurring close together—

e.g. Willful waste makes woeful want.

Alliteration is not an essential requisite in poetry, but it is common in all the best poets. Its effect on the ear is similar to that of rhyme, and its attractiveness is denoted by its frequent use in popular sayings and in hymns that have taken the public fancy. The commonest kind of alliteration is the repetition of a letter at the beginning of words—

e.g. ‘And on the spike that split the mother’s heart spitting the child.’

‘And wept and wished that I were dead.’

A subtler kind much used by Tennyson is the repetition of the alliterative letter in different parts of words, and the alternation of alliterative letters—

e.g. ‘Ran like a colt and leapt at all he saw.’
 ‘Dry clashed his harness in the icy caves.’
 ‘Fall battle-axe and flash brand!’

Onomatopœia.—This is an imitative process employed by the poet to make the sound an echo of the sense, thereby assisting the meaning and increasing the pleasure. This effect is most obvious and easy when the description of sounds is the subject matter. Since words are sounds, they can imitate sounds. English contains many examples of imitative words, *e.g.*, whizz, hiss, crash, clash, murmur, mutter. But the imitation is more effective when extended to a succession of words. Tennyson, a master of all metrical devices, uses this extended imitation most effectively. Frequently onomatopœic effects are combined with alliteration as in the famous passage descriptive of Bedivere’s carrying Arthur to the barge. (See *The Passing*, 354-358). See also—

✓ { I heard the ripple washing in the reeds,
 And the wild water lapping on the crag,
 Clang battle-axe, and clash brand,

CofA

'Shocks and the splintering spear, the hard mail hewn
Shield-breakings, and the clash of brands, the crash
Of battle-axes on shatter'd helms.'

108-110

Not only sounds, but movements may be suggested, as in the first example given above, *i.e.*, 354-8—

e.g. 'And flashing round and round, and whirl'd in an arch,
Shot like a *streamer* of the northern morn.'
'And full of voices slowly rose and plunged.'

FIGURES OF SPEECH.

Figures of Speech are deviations from the ordinary use of words intended either to add clearness to the thought or to impress the feelings through the imagination.

1. THOSE BASED ON RESEMBLANCE :—

(a) Simile.—A comparison between two objects, events, or states, commonly introduced by such words as *like*, *as*, *as if*. The effect of the simile is greatest when the likeness between the things compared is restricted to one point, while in other respects the things are totally unlike.

e.g. 'The great brand made lightnings . . . and whirl'd in an arch,
Shot like a streamer of the northern morn.'
'Then, before a voice
As dreadful as the shout of one who sees
To one who sins, and deems himself alone
And all the world asleep.'

(b) Metaphor.—In this figure the comparison is implied and not expressed. It is more concise than the simile, hence often employed where the use of simile would be less forcible. The metaphor may be contained in a single word or extended over a succession of words.

e.g. 'A doubtful throne is ice on summer seas.'
'This blind haze which hath folded in the passes of the world.'
'The moving isles of winter.'

(c) Personification.—The ascription of life and mind to inanimate things.

e.g. 'The tingling stars' 'Authority forgets a dying king.' 'Ye stars that shudder over me.'

(d) Allegory.—A description of one event, state, or thing under the image of another. The intention is to convey some moral lesson. An allegory is sometimes defined as a chain of metaphors. It may extend over a whole work as in *The Idylls of the King* or be restricted to single episodes, *e.g.*, Leodogran's dream; Merlin's triplets (*Coming*, ll. 402-10), are allegorical.

2. THOSE BASED ON DISSIMILARITY :—

(a) Antithesis.—This is the explicit statement of the contrast implied in any term. Most terms are relative and only fully com-

prehensible when the meaning of their opposites is known—*e.g.*, the comprehension of 'blessing' implies that the meaning of 'curse' is known.

e.g. 'His ways are *sweet* and theirs are *bestial*.'

'Light was Gawain in *life* and light in *death*.'

(b) Ozymoron.—This is a special instance of Antithesis in which the opposing terms are in close juxtaposition.

e.g. 'So loathed the bright dishonour of his love.'

3. THOSE BASED ON ASSOCIATION OR CONTIGUITY:—

(a) Metonymy.—The description of a thing by some accompaniment or significant adjunct instead of using its own name.

e.g. 'Clarions shrilling unto blood.' (Bloodshed, the accompaniment of war, is put for war.)

'His cuisses dashed with drops of onset.' (Onset, the cause of bloodshed, is put for its effect.)

'When all the purport of my throne hath fail'd.' (Throne, the symbol of rule, is put for rule or reign.)

(b) Synecdoche.—In this figure the name used is more or less akin in meaning to the one it stands for. The common symbols employed are:—the part for the whole: the concrete for the abstract, and *vice versa*: the species for the genus, and *vice versa*.

e.g. 'My realm reels back into the *beast*' (concrete for abstract).

'Felt travail, and throes and agonies of the *life*' (whole for the part).

4. MISCELLANEOUS:—

(a) Hyperbole or "exaggeration" is admissible in poetry if it be sparingly used; if the departure from truth be not offensive, and if the exaggeration is original and not commonplace.

e.g. *The Coming*, 299-300: *The Passing*, 305-7: in both there are exaggerated descriptions of Excalibur harmonising with its wonderful properties.

See also *The Passing*, 367-9.

(b) Climax.—This is an arrangement of sentences, phrases, or words so as to rise in strength, step by step, to the last.

e.g. { 'Travail, throes, and agonies of the life.'
'Miserable and unkind, untrue, unknightly, and traitor-hearted.'

(c) Irony or Sarcasm.—An uncomplimentary meaning veiled under complimentary expression. The real meaning is shown either by the tone of utterance or by the context.

e.g. *The Coming*, 160-62.

(d) Interrogation.—This figure conveys an opinion by putting as a question. No answer is needed or the speaker gives one himself.

e.g. *The Coming*, 140-43. *The Passing*, 260, 261, 263-4, 266-8.

(e) Exclamation.—This expresses strong emotion and is commonly expressed in an abrupt, inverted, or elliptical fashion.

e.g. *The Coming*, 334-5. *The Passing*, 148.

(f) Vision.—The imagination of something that may have occurred in the past or may occur in the future.

e.g. *The Coming*, 413-18. *The Passing*, 202-3, 270-76.

(g) Ellipsis.—A figure conducing to brevity by the omission of words essential to the full structure of the sentence, but readily supplied from a study of the context.

e.g. *The Coming*.—‘Let chance what will,’ 133.

The Passing.—‘Nor yet of heathen,’ 129.

(h) Heniadys.—The use of two nouns for a noun and adjective.

e.g. *The Coming*, 197.—‘Wrath and heat’ equals ‘hot wrath.’

(i) Anacoluthon.—An abrupt change in construction whereby a new sentence is begun before finishing the preceding.

e.g. *The Coming*, 182-3

CHIEF CHARACTERS.

ARTHUR.—(a) *The Coming*.—As a king, Arthur is the redeemer of his country. He unites the jarring principdoms into one peaceful realm, frees his country from the ravages of heathen and wild beasts, tells the dark beast-haunted forests, and dispels the gloom that broods over the land. To secure the progress gained and to ensure the further advance of the realm to conformity with his ideal, the fellowship of the Table Round is bound by strait vows to the King, so that modelling their lives on his pattern they may, by clean living, high thinking, and noble deeds, attain an invincible unity and furnish a shining example to the world. In the flush of new-born zeal the knights feel the divinity of the King and yield him single-hearted devotion.

‘The King will follow Christ and we the King
In whom high God hath breathed a secret thing.’

As a man, the Black Prince was not less averse than Arthur to self-display. He rides “a simple knight among his knights, and many of these in richer arms than he.” . . . Love’s arrow smites him deeply, but the pangs of yearning for Guinevere cannot turn him from the path of duty. His hope of union with her springs from no sensual desire; it is a craving for sacred union with a being the complement of himself, whereby he may gain increased power and virtue to lighten a dark land and make a dead world live. Such love as his bears no stain of earth and cannot be loosened even by the pains of death.

The tenderness shown in childhood to Bellicent continues in manhood in the sweet ways that make him seem unmanly to those whose ways are bestial. In battle, the "fire of God descends" upon him, he becomes "mightier of his hands with every blow," and slacks not until the sight of a routed foe touches his generous pity and moves him to stay pursuit.

Truth to the plighted word is, in his eyes, a sacred obligation. Come weal, come woe, "Man's word is God in man" and trust once given must hold till death.

(b) *The Passing*.—Bitter disappointment in friend and wife, the relapse of his realm into bestialism have shattered Arthur's peace. The high confidence in his mission that upheld him in face of the difficulties that beset his opening career is broken and replaced by a wavering spirit that at one moment doubts the wisdom of God's ways to man, at another clings despairingly to the hope that he will not die. Yet he presses on to that last weird battle in the west, heart-broken at the prospect of fighting his own people, but determined to trample down treachery and sensualism, though the future, once so bright and clear, is now shrouded in a blind haze of doubt and despondency. King he is to the last and his last act of kingship is to strike down the arch traitor, Modred.

(c) *Other Idylls*.—The following extracts are given to show the views of Arthur's character held by those connected with him.

Guinevere. 'the faultless King,
That passionate perfection, my good lord. . . .
He never spake word of reproach to me,
He never had a glimpse of mine untruth.'—*Lancelot and Elaine*.

After⁸ her farewell meeting:—

'Ah, great and gentle lord,
Who wast, as is the conscience of a saint
Among his warring senses, to thy knights—
To whom my false voluptuous pride . . .
Would not look up. . . .
I thought I could not breathe in that fine air
That pure severity of perfect light.'—*Guinevere*.

Lancelot. 'However mild he seems at home, nor cares
For triumph in our mimic wars, the jousts
For if his own knight cast him down, he laughs
Saying his knights are better men than he—
Yet in this heathen war the fire of God
Fills him: I never saw his like: there lives
No greater leader.'—*Lancelot and Elaine*.

Tristram. 'he seem'd to me no man
But Michael trampling Satan . . .
And every follower eyed him as a God.'—*The Last Tournament*.

BEDIVERE.—The "bold" Sir Bedivere was the first to be knighted by Arthur at his crowning, and was one of the messengers sent to Leodogran to ask for the hand of Guinevere. In reply to Leodogran's question, "Hold ye this Arthur for King Uther's son," Bedivere declared his faith in Arthur's legitimacy.

'For bold in heart and act and word was he,
Whenever slander breathed against the King.'

Bedivere's answer shows his prosaic nature. He has no belief in the mystic origin of Arthur, but is satisfied with a rationalistic solution of the mystery that envelops the King's birth and early life.

In *The Passing* he is Arthur's close companion before and after the battle, and the pair form a fine contrast—Bedivere with the bold, blunt, practical nature of the Teuton, and Arthur with the quick sensibility and dreamy imagination of the Celt. Bedivere is a man of action, disinclined to waste time on idle regrets and useless dreams. He urges Arthur to let pass "elves and the harmless glamour of the field," not to care for dreams from Gawain's ghost, but to go forth and conquer Modred and his ungodly host. So long as life lasts and work remains to be done, Bedivere sees no use in lamenting the irrevocable. So when the fight is done and Arthur is lamenting his dead, Bedivere recalls him to the present need of doing justice on Modred, the traitor, still unharmed.

Bedivere's love for Arthur is genuine and strong, though uninspired by sympathy with the finer spiritual elements of Arthur's work and character. Hence what regret he is capable of is given to the loss of the "true old times"—

'When every morning brought a noble chance,
And every chance brought out a noble knight.'

GUINEVERE.—Neither poem affords sufficient material for a picture of Guinevere. Two points alone in *The Coming* are of any value as an indication of her inner self, and these may easily be over-estimated. Her worldly eyes fail to note the stamp of kingliness in Arthur's face as he passes "a simple knight" without the "golden symbol of his kinglihood." Again, her "drooping eyes" on her marriage day may signify consciousness of her inability to rise to the spiritual ideal imagined by her lord.

In *The Passing* a slight allusion is made in the line "one lying in the dust at Almesbury." For the rest, she is the "fairest of all flesh on earth," the one delight of Leodogran, and when Arthur first sees her, "the light of her eyes" smites on the sudden into his life.

From other idylls we learn that her love for Lancelot when "as yet no sin was dreamed," began in that May ride when Lancelot as ambassador came "to lead her to his lord."

Thus prepossessed, she finds no attraction in the "cold, high, self-contained, and passionless" Arthur.

'He is all fault who hath no fault at all;
For who loves me must have a touch of earth.'

Her sensuous fancy centres on Lancelot, and finally leads her into the sin which, germ-like, corrupted the whole Order until the "loathsome opposite" of all that Arthur's heart had destined "did obtain."

Arthur's magnanimous forgiveness fills her with remorse; too late she sees that he is "the highest and most human too," and that now nought remains for her to show the love she feels but to

'wear out in almsdeed and in prayer
The sombre close of that voluptuous day,
Which wrought the ruin of my lord the King.'

LANCELOT.—Nothing is said of him in *The Passing*. In *The Coming*, he is the warrior whom Arthur loved and honoured most, the sworn brother of the King, the first to acknowledge his kingship and the chosen ambassador to escort Guinevere from her home to her marriage. In the other idylls he is the foremost knight of the Order, the darling of the Court, a stately yet kindly figure, full of courtesy and generosity, and in his warm life and vigorous personality a contrast to the cold pure saintliness of Arthur.

'The great and guilty love he bare the Queen
Had marr'd his face and mark'd it ere his time.
Another sinning on such heights with one
The flower of all the west and all the world,
Had been the sleeker for it; but in him
His mood was often like a fiend, and rose
And drove him into wastes and solitudes
For agony, who was yet a living soul.'

MODRED.—The son of Bellicent and Lot of Orkney, and therefore Arthur's nephew, is marked as an eaves-dropper on his appearance in *The Coming*, where also his future treachery and doom are glanced at. In *The Passing*, he is a traitor, and has seduced Arthur's knights and people from their allegiance to join with the heathen in overthrowing his kinsman. Modred falls smitten with the last stroke of Excalibur, but in falling gives Arthur his death-wound.

Other idylls afford material for a more complete description. He moves through the brilliant court of Arthur, an inglorious knight whose shield "blank as death" bears no token of noble deeds. His sinister appearance, "narrow foxy face, heart-hiding smile, and gray persistent eye" accords fitly with the dark designs harboured in his heart. "Like a subtle beast" he watches persistently for a chance to wreck his uncle's rule and to wound him by exposing the guilt of Guinevere. To gain the throne—

· He chill'd the popular praises of the King
 With silent smiles of slow disparagement ;
 And tamper'd with the Lords of the White Horse,
 Heathen, the brood by Hengist left ; and sought
 To make disruption in the Table Round
 Of Arthur, and to splinter it into feuds
 Serving his traitorous end ; and all his aims
 Were sharpened by strong hate for Lancelot '

SUMMARY OF THE POEMS.

The Coming of Arthur.

1-40. *State of Cameliard.*—Leodogran, King of Cameliard, had but one delight—his daughter Guinevere, fairest of all flesh on earth. For Britain, wasted by the strife of petty kings and the ravages of heathen, was rapidly becoming a wilderness when Arthur followed Aurelius and Uther, and succeeded where they had failed in making one realm. So Cameliard was a waste of beast-haunted forest swamps, and its fields and gardens were ruined by wild beasts. Its children were devoured by wolves or, still worse, stolen and reared by wolves, grew up wolf-like men, worse than the wolves.Leodogran, in distress, longed for the return of the Romans. Then the attack of Urien, a fellow-king, and a ferocious heathen raid, dazed him completely.

41-62. *Arthur helps Leodogran.*—Hearing of Arthur's crowning, Leodogran called for help, and Arthur, yet untried in war, answered the call. Guinevere, standing by the castle walls, failed to note him as he rode by, a simple knight without a mark of royalty ; but a glance from her eyes set Arthur on fire with love ; yet he followed duty, drove out the heathen, slew the beasts, felled the forest, and let in the sun.

63-93. *Revolt of the Barons.*—Doubt of Arthur's parentage stirred his barons to ally themselves with many petty kings, and to rise in open revolt. Arthur, recalled from Cameliard, suffers on the way the pangs of desire for union with Guinevere. Mated with her, united in life and mind, he can hope to raise dead Britain into life ; without her, life will be empty of happiness and his work incomplete.

94-133. *The Battle.*—The day was infinitely clear. The fortunes of the fight wavered till heaven-sent thunder and lightning dazed the rebels. Then Arthur confounded them with the might of his blows and overthrew the kings. A terrible voice smote the rebels with the panic of guilt and they fled. At Arthur's bidding the slaughter of the fugitives is stopped. With Lancelot he rejoices in the victory, and the two exchange pledges of brotherhood.

134-171. *Leodogran's Reluctance*.—From the field, Bedivere and others are sent by Arthur to ask for Guinevere in marriage. Leodogran, grateful but reluctant to give his daughter to one whose royalty is disputed, consults his chamberlain, and learns that the secret of Arthur's birth is known only to Bleys and Merlin. He then asks the messengers whether they think Arthur is Uther's son.

172-236. *Bedivere's Tale*.—Bedivere replies that the rumours spring either from the hate of Arthur's bestial foes or from the imagination of his friends. Bedivere's belief is that Uther, failing to tempt Ygerne, slew her husband, Gorlois, Prince of Cornwall, and married Ygerne by force. Shortly after Uther died, waiting for an heir. That night Arthur was born, and from fear of the fierce lords, who would have torn the child piecemeal had they known, Arthur was taken secretly by Merlin to Sir Anton to be reared as his own. When the hour came, Merlin got him crowned as Uther's heir in spite of protests that Arthur was either the son of Gorlois or of Anton or base-born.

237-252. *Bellicent's Arrival*.—While Leodogran was debating within himself the truth of the matter, Bellicent, Queen of Orkney, arrived with her sons Gawain and Modred. Leodogran entertained her to the best of his scanty resources, and at the feast asked whether Arthur, though victor, had enough forces to subdue his foes.

253-308. *Description of the Coronation*.—In reply Bellicent described the coronation scene to show the resources at Arthur's command. These were the devotion of his knights bound to him by strait vows, the help of three fair queens, of mage Merlin and of the Lady of the Lake, a subtler magician than Merlin, and a being with divine power. From her Arthur had received the wonderful sword Excalibur, and with this he would beat his foemen down.

309-357. *Bellicent's Tale of her Childhood*.—Leodogran, only half satisfied, inquired further whether Bellicent were Arthur's sister. Before answering she dismissed Gawain and Modred. She owned that Arthur was fair, while Ygerne, Uther, Gorlois, and herself were all dark, and confessed to recollection of her mother's lament that she, Bellicent, had no brother to protect her. Her first meeting with Arthur occurred when she was in some childish trouble and he consoled her. Afterwards she saw him often, loved him well, and always thought he would be king.

358-410. *Bleys' Confession*.—After her own remembrances Bellicent told how Bleys, at the point of death, had confessed to her that on the black night of Uther's death, he and Merlin, passing from the castle to the beach had seen, as if in heaven, a bright ship with shining people. As they watched the sea, a ninth wave all in flame, dashed a naked babe at Merlin's feet. This Merlin took and surrounded with fire proclaimed as Uther's heir. "This same child," said Bleys, "is he who reigns." When Bellicent asked Merlin if this was true, he met her with evasive riddles that angered her.

411-423. *Bellisent's Advice*.—She bade Leodogran not fear to give his daughter. Arthur's fame would ring through future times and Merlin had prophesied that Arthur should pass but not die. Now or at his second coming he should smite the heathen, and be hailed by all men as King.

424-445. *Leodogran's Dream*.—While doubting, Leodogran slept and saw in sleep a landslope rising to a peak haze-hidden, and thereon a phantom king. On the slope, fire glimpsed, smoke streamed, soldiers slew and burned. At times a voice came from the phantom and was answered by "No King of ours, no son of Uther." Suddenly the haze fell, the earth became as nothing, and the King stood out in heaven, crowned. So Leodogran waking gave his consent.

446-501. *The Marriage*.—Then Lancelot, Arthur's best loved knight, went for Guinevere. Amid the glories of May, at Britain's stateliest altar, Arthur, surrounded by his knights in stainless white, swore deathless love to Guinevere. Holy Dubric blessed them all for the work that lay before them. As they left the shrine, great Roman lords stood gazing at them scornfully. Then as the procession paced the city, trumpets blew and Arthur's knights sang the divine mission of their leader, and exhorted each other to follow him to the death.

502-518. At the banquet the Roman lords demanded the tribute due to Rome. This refused, they left in wrath, and Arthur for a time strove with Rome. Afterwards, during the time that his knights remained in accord with him, Arthur conquered the heathen and made a realm and reigned.

The Passing of Arthur.

1-5. *The Narrator*.—Bedivere told the tale in the winter of his age to his companions, men of a later age.

6-28. *Arthur's Despondency*.—On the march westward, Bedivere overheard the King lamenting the incomprehensibility of God's ways to man. The world seemed under the control of some deity with limited powers. His life's work was in vain, and God had forgotten him. "Nay—God, my Christ—I pass but shall not die."

29-49. *Gawain's Ghost*.—The ghost came to Arthur asleep, with a cry that all delight is hollow, and a prophecy that the morrow would see Arthur pass to an isle of rest. As Gawain's cries died along the wind, Arthur awoke and wondered if the cries were Gawain's or those of mourning spirits.

50-64. *Bedivere's Exhortation*.—Let the King heed neither elves nor the ghost of light Gawain. Modred and the recreants were before him, and he should arise and conquer them.

66-78. *Arthur's Forebodings*.—Arthur contrasts mournfully this battle with those of his youth. Then he fought for country, now against his own people, and therefore against himself. Ever since he left Guinevere lying in the dust, a blind haze has shrouded the future.

79-135. *The Battle*.—The King pushed Modred back till he stood at bay on the western coast of Lyonesse. It was mid-winter. A white mist chilled the blood and inspired a formless fear. In the mist friend slew friend, visions were seen, base deeds, noble deeds, were done in single combat. Out of the mist came the crash of weapons, shrieks of the dying, oaths and blasphemies of the heathen, until all was hushed. Then, as day waned, a bitter wind swept away the mist, and the pale King could hear no sound but the voice of the waves, and saw no motion save the swaying of dead hands and the rolling of broken weapons by the rising tide.

136-169. *Modred's Death*.—Arthur's lamentation over his dead and his loss of kingship leads Bedivere to point out that they two are living, and Modred, the traitor, stands unharmed. Arthur repudiates kinship with Modred. To show that he is still king, he makes at Modred and slays him with the last stroke of Excalibur, receiving at the same time his own death-wound.

✓ 170-206. *Result of the Battle*.—All the knights are dead save Bedivere. He carries Arthur to a ruined chapel close by. The king reviews his position and directs what is to be done. The fellowship is broken; they will never see Camelot again; Arthur is perishing by his own people in spite of Merlin's prediction and cannot last till morn. So Bedivere must fling Excalibur into the mere and note what happens.

207-300. *Bedivere yields to Temptation*.—Reluctantly leaving the wounded king, Bedivere stepped down to the lake. The beauty of the sword tempted him and he hid it in the reeds. Arthur, receiving an evasive answer, accused Bedivere of treachery and falsehood and bade him return. The second time Bedivere dwelt in thought, trying to satisfy himself with specious argument that it could not be wrong to disobey a sick king demanding a thing hurtful to himself. Excalibur gone, no relic of Arthur would be left, hence much future fame would be lost. So, led astray by his own sophistry, he hid Excalibur again. Arthur again discerned his unfaithfulness and reproached him for his unknighly, treacherous conduct, bemoaning that the last of his knights should betray him either from greed or vanity. A third chance is given Bedivere with a threat that the king will kill him if he fails.

301-329. *Bedivere succeeds*.—Bedivere ran quickly, clutched the sword and hurled it without looking at it. The great brand described a fiery arch in the air. As it fell, an arm thrust from the mere caught it and drew it under. On Bedivere's return, Arthur saw from his eyes that the work was done and listened to his tale.

330-360. *The Passage to the Lake.*—At Arthur's command, Bedivere with tears in his eyes, lifted the dying king tenderly and bore him swiftly over the frozen hills, through icy caves and chasms, over juts of slippery crag, down to the edge of the shining lake.

361-393. *The Barge receives Arthur.*—At the lake side was a dusky barge, its decks crowded with stately black-robed forms and among them three queens with golden crowns. And from them rose a wild cry of lamentation that shivered to the tingling stars. Bedivere delivered the King into the hands of the weeping queens. The fairest of these laid his head in her lap and mourned over the fallen hero. He, battle-stained and wan with pain, little resembled that Arthur who was once the star of tournament.

394-406. *Bedivere's Grief.*—Loud cries burst from Bedivere. What should he do? The old knightly times were gone and he must now go forth alone to live among strangers.

407-432. *Arthur's Advice.*—Bedivere must comfort himself with the thought that God fulfils himself in many ways. Prayer for Arthur and for himself must be his solace, for prayer raises men above the beasts and links the earth to God's throne. Arthur must go to the happy valley of Avilion there to heal him of his wound.

433-469. *Bedivere watches the departing Barge.*—The swan-like barge moved away and Bedivere watched it till the hull seemed a black dot and the wailing died away. Hope suggested the return of Arthur, but was quenched by the thought that the three dark queens were they who stood by Arthur's throne, clothed in living light at his coronation. As he stood, from the horizon came the faint echo of rejoicing and again he climbed and from the highest point saw the speck that bore the King vanish into light.



NOTES.

EXPLANATORY, HISTORICAL, AND ETYMOLOGICAL.

ABBREVIATIONS.

A.S.	Anglo Saxon.	L.	Latin.
M.E.	Middle English.	Low L.	Low Latin.
Fr.	French.	Ital.	Italian.
O.Fr.	Old French.	Germ.	German.
Gr.	Greek.	O.H.G.	Old High German.

cf. compare.

THE COMING OF ARTHUR.

1. **Leodogran.** In Malory the king is called *Leodgrancee*.
- Cameliard.** The geography of the Arthurian legends is largely fanciful, and the position of Cameliard cannot be defined.
3. **fairest of all flesh.** When Arthur proposed to marry Guinevere, Merlin said, "Sir, as of her beauty and fairness she is one of the fairest on live (alive)." . . . "But Merlin warned the king that Guenever was not wholesome for him to take to wife, for he warned him that Lancelot should love her, and she him again."—(MALORY.)
4. And his only delight was in her. What follows shows that Leodogran had nothing else to take pleasure in. Cameliard was a wilderness, harried by heathens and a prey to wild beasts.
5. **petty.** Fr. *petit*, little. These petty kings would be chiefs of tribes, uncontrolled by a central authority, though Geoffrey of Monmouth (1147 A.D.), in his *History of British Kings*, gives a list of rulers of this island from Brut, great grandson of Æneas the Trojan, to Cadwallader (688 A.D.).
7. **Each upon other.** In prose, *each upon the other*, if two are designated, and *one upon another* for more than two.
8. **heathen host:** the English, *i.e.*, Angles and Saxons.
11. Wild beasts increased and men decreased in numbers.
13. **Aurelius.** According to Geoffrey of Monmouth, Aurelius defeated Vortigern, the British king of Kent, overcame the Saxons under Hengist, and transported the great stones of Stonehenge from their original home in Ireland.
14. **Uther:** Arthur's father and the brother of Aurelius. Uther was a mighty warrior, whose conquests extended into Scotland. He took for his standard a golden dragon, whence he was called Pendragon (Dragon's Head). He was buried at Stonehenge.
- 13-14. All that is worth record in the lives of Aurelius and Uther is summed up in "fought and died." Arthur's career contrasts strongly with those of his forerunners.

15. **either** = each, and is a pronoun. The ending *-ther* is an ancient comparative ending (cf. *further*, *other*), and its force restricts the use of the pronoun *either* to denote one member of a pair.

17. **puissance**. Fr. = power, might.

Table Round = here the order of knights instituted by Arthur. The round table at which they took their meals was, according to Malory, made by Merlin, the wizard, for Uther, and given by him to Leodogran. Leodogran gave the table, and the hundred knights who sat at it, as a present to Arthur on his marriage with Guinevere. The order consisted of 150 knights.

19. **king and head**: in apposition with *him* (l. 18).

21. **Thick with wet woods**. Suggestive of the melancholy existence of the dwellers in Cameliard, even without the ravages wrought by man and beast. Britain in early times was thickly covered with swampy forest.

24. **rooted**, uprooted the crops.

28-32. Tales of the adoption of children by wolves are common to all countries. Romulus, the legendary founder of Rome, and Remus, his brother, were said to have been reared by a wolf. The were-wolf, or loup-garou, of the middle ages, was a man with the appetites of a wolf. (cf. also Mowgli in the *Jungle Book* (Kipling).)

28. **brood**: Nominative absolute.

31. **mock**, imitate.

34. **Groan'd for**, longed for.

legions. A legion was a division of a Roman army, consisting nominally of 6,000 infantry, but it seldom had its full number.

35. **eagle**: the standard of the Roman legion. Here it is the symbol of the Roman rule.

36. **Urien**. In Malory, Leodogran was attacked by Rience, king of North Wales, but Arthur came to the rescue and defeated Rience.

heathen horde, i.e., the Saxons.

38. Note the alliteration in *spike*, *split*, *Spitting*. These short sharp sounds are vividly suggestive of the action.

39. **brake**: the nominative is *horde* in l. 36.

amazed: stronger in meaning than the ordinary use: dazed, utterly at a loss.

43. **He is not Uther's son**. For the reason of this charge see lines 184-240.

45. **between the man and beast we die**, i.e., we are perishing from the ravages of men and wild beasts.

50. **golden symbol**: a crown.

kinglihood: *-hood* (A. S. *had*), a suffix denoting state, used for making abstract nouns, e.g., *maidenhood*, *godhead*.

54. **tho' his face was bare**: implying that she might have seen his kinglihood in his face. As later events show, Guinevere was obtuse to spiritual things.

55. Arthur's love was sudden but enduring, as shown by the pregnant phrase, *into his life*. Though deeply smitten, he put duty first, and

rode on to accomplish his task. The introduction of trochees, *e.g.*, *Felt the | light of and Smite on*, serves to indicate the suddenness of the feeling.

58. **drave**: the ancient form of *drove*. A.S. *drifan*, past tense *draf*. Cf. *Exodus* xiv. 25, "And took off their chariot-wheels that they *drave* them heavily."

59. **the beast**: used as a collective noun.

63. **smoulder'd**. A metaphor taken from fire. It is continued in *Flash'd* (l. 65). The doubt whether Arthur was Uther's son was at first unexpressed. It strengthened and finally expressed itself in the revolt of the lords.

66. **Colleaguings**: *col*, from L. *cum*, with, and *leaguings*, L. *ligare*, to bind = forming alliance with.

67. **Made head**: the subject is *most*, *i.e.*, most of the barons gathered together in force.

68. **proven**: a form still in use in the verdict "Not proven" of Scottish law courts, given when the evidence does not fully justify either the condemnation or the acquittal of the prisoner.

72. **son of Gorlois**: see lines 185, etc.

73. **son of Anton**: see lines 221, etc.

75. **Travail**, pangs. From L. *trabs*, a beam, through Fr. *travail*, work. (See *Glossary*.)

75-6. Sudden love for Guinevere has thrown Arthur's whole being into commotion. *Travail*, *throes*, *agonies* form a climax vividly descriptive of his passionate yearning for union with Guinevere.

81. **What happiness, etc.** A question or exclamation denoting the impossibility of complete happiness to an unwedded king.

lonely king. The divinity that hedges round a king deprives him of the pleasures of friendship which humbler mortals enjoy.

82. **Vext**, harassed. L. *verare*, originally to shake, then to injure, maltreat.

82-3. **O ye stars, etc.** The exaggeration of the lover, who feels that his whole life (symbolised by stars and earth) will be marred by the lack of the mate he longs for. Already the lofty aspirations of his spirit seem less distinct, and all on earth is vanity.

84. **waste dreams**, *i.e.*, barren, unproductive of action.

saving: a conjunction — unless, followed by subjunctive.

86-93. **I seem as nothing, etc.** A strong tribute to the spiritual power of marriage as enabling man to fulfil his mission to the highest degree. Note the contrast between Arthur and the previous kings, who "fought and died," both in his love and his ideal of kingship.

90. **as one life**. as one being.

92. **dark land**, *i.e.*, sunk in the darkness of ignorance.

93. **dead world**, *i.e.*, dead to spiritual things.

98. **faintest hill**, the farthest hill, and therefore dimly seen.

95-9. The clearness and brightness of the scene, the morning star, indicate the bright prospects of a glorious career for Arthur.

102. **clarions**, trumpets with shrill, clear notes. Fr. *clairon*, trumpet.

shrilling: expressive of the sound.

unto blood: blood is a graphic symbol for fight, war. An instance of metonymy.

103 **long-lanced battle:** a concise and vigorous phrase of the knights with their long lances.

battle: originally used for an army. (*Cf.* "What may the king's whole battle reach unto? To thirty thousand" (*I. Hen. IV.*)).

105-6 As first in one part of the field and then in another the fighters massed themselves. The fight was of the character of the *mêlée* as described in *Ivanhoe*.

106. **the Powers who walk the world.** Malory's short description of the war contains no account of miraculous intervention; but such intervention is in keeping with the ideal mission assigned to Arthur by the poet. *Cf. Guinevere* for the description of the joy of elves and spirits at the founding of the order of the Table Round.

108 **dazed, dazzled.**

109. **mightier of his hands.** The force of his blows increased as he went on fighting. *Mightier* and *leading* are attributive to *Arthur* (l. 108).

110. **threw, overthrew**

111. *et seq.* These are the names of some of the eleven kings, who, according to Malory, swore not to rest till they had destroyed Arthur. With them Arthur fought a great battle prior to the rescue of Leodogran.

115. The voice of Arthur strikes sudden panic into the allied forces. Their minds are as perturbed and unreasoning as that of the evil-doer taken by surprise at the moment when he thinks himself safe from detection.

119. **Flying:** attributive to *they* (l. 118).

brands, swords. A.S. *brand*, fire, firebrand; but was used for "sword" in poetry.

120 **Ho:** An exclamation to stay the fight. *Cf.* Malory: "Merlin said unto Arthur, 'Thou hast never done. Hast thou not done enough? Of three score thousand this day hast thou left alive but fifteen thousand, and it is time to say Ho!'"

121. **like a painted battle.** All were motionless, and the battle-field for the moment resembled a picture of warfare rather than the reality of it. *Cf.* "As idle as a painted ship upon a painted ocean" (*Ancient Mariner*).

122 **living** may be taken as a Nominative absolute.

123. **joy was lord:** a picturesque mode of representing that joy was his chief feeling.

124. **warrior.** This was Sir Lancelot of the Lake, foremost of the order of the Round Table.

125. **King:** in apposition with *me*. *Me, King*, a concise phrase for "that I am King."

127. **liege.** Bound by feudal tenure; the term might be applied to the vassal or his lord.

the fire of God. Either an allusion to the miraculous lightnings (l. 107), or to Arthur's superhuman energy in the fight. For the latter sense *cf.* Lancelot's answer to Lavaine—

"Yet in this heathen war *the fire of God*
Fills him: I never saw his like: there lives
No greater leader."—(*Lancelot and Elaine.*)

130. **warded either**, guarded or defended the other. *Guard* and *ward* are doublets. A.S. *weard*, guardianship. *Guard* from Fr. *garder*, to guard.

131. **Sware a deathless love.** In the days of chivalry, two knights often pledged themselves mutually to undertake some daring enterprise and to aid each other to the death. Knights so pledged were termed *Fratres Jurati*, sworn brothers.

Sware, swore. A.S. *swerian* had a past tense *swōr*. Probably the form *sware* is due to the influence of such verbs as *bare*, original past tense of *bear*.

132. **Man's word is God in man.** A pledge is to be regarded as sacred. Fidelity to a sworn pledge has something divine in it.

133. **Let chance what will (chance).** *Chance*, happen. According to some grammarians, *Let* is imperative mood, 2nd person, agreeing with (*you*). *What will (chance) chance* is then object of *Let*, and the second *chance* is a present infinitive. However, it seems better to regard the sentence as a periphrastic form of the imperative (3rd person) in which *Let* is auxiliary of the imperative and "*what will (chance)*" is a noun clause subject of the second "*chance*."

134. **foughten.** A.S. *feohtan*, to fight, had past partic. *fohten*.

137. **auht.** A.S. *a* and *wiht* (thing). *a* = any, as in "*a burnt child dreads the fire.*"

139. **Whom**, and him. This use of a relative to introduce a sentence is a Latinism.

141. **holp**, helped. A.S. *helpan* had past tense *healp*, which gave *holp*, and past part. *holpen*.

142-3. **to a king And a king's son**, *i.e.*, to one who is not only a king but also the son of a king.

150. **Merlin.** Professor Morley considers that Merlin was probably born between 470 and 480 A.D., took the name of Ambrose from respect for Ambrosius Aurelianus, a British leader, and that after serving Ambrosius he entered Arthur's service. In Malory Merlin enters abruptly on the scene without preliminary description. His first exploit is to make Uther look like Gorlois, duke of Tintagel, in order to deceive Ygraine, the latter's wife. In *Merlin and Vivien*, Tennyson describes him—

"the most famous man of all those times,
Merlin, who knew the range of all their arts,
Had built the King his havens, ships, and halls,
Was also Bard, and knew the starry heavens;
The people call'd him Wizard."

152. **Bleys**, Bleise or Blaise. Malory says that Bleise lived in Northumberland, and Merlin caused him to write all the battles that were done in Arthur's days, and all the battles that every worthy knight of Arthur's court did.

153-4. **the scholar** (Merlin) surpassed his master in knowledge of magic.

155. **sat him down:** *him* is reflexive and originally was a dative case. The use of the personal pronoun for the reflexive form is very ancient and survives to-day in the Midland dialect. Note that "*sat*" is intransitive and compare with "*Fare thee well*," "*Haste thee away*," "*Hee thee home*."

160. **holpen:** former past participle of *help*, which was once a verb of the strong conjugation.

160-62. An instance of irony. The sense is, "If I had been served by Arthur (a stranger) less well than by you (a trusted servant), I should now be ruined." The chamberlain's information is useless since it casts no light on the secret of Arthur's birth.

162. **had had** = would have had: subjunctive mood following the subjunctive "*had I been holpen*" (l. 160).

166-7. **lesser** is a double comparative. The cuckoo is said to deposit its one egg in some other bird's nest. The young cuckoo, bigger and stronger than its fellow nestlings, turns them out of the nest. Hence the little birds band together to drive the cuckoo away from their nests. Such a chase Leodogran thinks is reasonable. His metaphor indicates his desire to learn whether Arthur is the cuckoo (intruder) being driven away by the lesser fowl (barons) from their nest (Uther's kingdom).

169-70. **Some, Others** are pronouns in apposition with *lords*. For the tale of the parentage of Arthur see Bedivere's account in ll. 184-233.

175. **bold in heart, etc.** Bedivere is above all a man of action and completely devoted to Arthur, though he does not believe that Arthur's origin was miraculous.

176. **slander** is personified.

breathed, i.e., uttered words (of calumny). *Breath* is a frequent poetical term for *words*.

177-8. **be:** the old form of the indicative present plural. Cf. "*We be twelve brethren*" (*Genesis* xlii 32)

179. **baseborn:** complement of *Call*.

sweet: an antithesis to *bestial* (l. 180)

180. **bestial.** L. *bestia*, a beast.

hold: the subject is *who* (l. 178) or (*they*).

182. **belief** has no verb. Bedivere continues with a fresh subject. Such an abrupt change in construction is called *anacoluthon*.

187. **Ygerne.** "King Uther sent for this duke (Gorlois) charging him to bring his wife with him, for she was called a fair lady, and a passing wise (surpassingly wise lady), and her name was called Igraine."—(MALORY).

188. **daughters.** In Malory these are Margawse (here Bellicent) who married King Lot of Lothian and Orkney, Elaine wife of King Nentres of Garlot, and Morgan le Fay who was educated in a nunnery, and became "a great clerk of nigromancy" (i.e., a magician).

192. **eyes of love:** *eyes* by metonymy put for *looks*.

194. **bright dishonour.** A sharp antithesis called *oxymoron*. *Bright* denotes the splendour of the position that would be hers as the wife of Uther. The *dishonour* would be the breach of her marriage vows to Gorlois.

197. **wrath and heat:** a hendiadys for "*hot wrath.*"

201. Expressive of Ygerne's defenceless state. She could only trust to Uther's mercy.

202. **compass'd,** encircled, surrounded.

203-4. **tears and shameful** have reference to the recent death of Gorlois.

205. **moons,** *i.e.*, months. In Malory, Uther lives nearly two years afterwards, is aware of Arthur's birth, and allows Merlin to place him with Sir Ector (Anton). Further, in the presence of the barons, Uther, on the point of death, charges Merlin to see that Arthur claims the throne. Tennyson's alteration of Malory deepens the mystery of Arthur's birth, and thus explains better the hostility of the barons.

207. **wrack,** wreck, ruin. *Wreck* is a form of *wreck*, and when used in the sense of "*seaweed*" it means that which is thrown up by the waves; in shipwreck the idea is to cast away, hence destruction generally.

210. **all,** quite. An adverb modifying *before*.

211. **all,** just, even. An adverb modifying *as soon as*.

212. **a secret postern-gate.** "And when the child is born let it be delivered to me at yonder privy *postern* unchristened. So like as Merlin devised it was done."—(MALORY.)

213. **holden:** the former past participle of *hold*.

214. **his hour,** the proper time for declaring him Uther's son and heir.

215. **fierce day,** wild, disordered time. *Day* by synecdoche is used for "*age*" or "*time,*" *i.e.*, a part for the whole.

216. *cf.* Malory: "Then stood the realm in great jeopardy long while, for every lord that was mighty of men made him strong, and many wend [expected] to have been king," *i.e.*, after Uther's death.

217. **Piecemeal,** piece by piece. Fr. *pièce*, part; A.S. *mael*, measure, time; but in plur. *maelum* = manner.

221. **Sir Anton:** called *Sir Ector* in Malory.

233. **baseborn.** Those who called him baseborn supposed that Ygerne had yielded to Uther's love before Gorlois' death.

234. **the people clamour'd.** Malory's version of Arthur's selection states that in the churchyard of the greatest church in London there suddenly appeared a great stone with an anvil on it. In the anvil was fixed a sword inscribed thus: "Whoso pulleth out this sword of this stone and anvil is rightwise king born of all England." Only Arthur could pull it out, and though the lords insisted on several trials at different times, none but Arthur succeeded. Then the commons cried out for Arthur to be king, and the lords agreed and "cried Arthur mercy, because they had delayed him so long."

238. **shamefulness.** See *baseborn* (l. 233).

245. **Whom:** object governed by *for* (l. 246).

as he could, etc. Leodogran entertained Bellicent with as much festivity as the ruined state of Cameliard permitted, but much less royally than he wished.

247. **A doubtful throne,** a throne held by one whose right to it is not perfectly certain.

ice on summer seas. A vivid metaphor denoting the instability of such a throne. Power based on doubtful claims will be as little durable as an iceberg that has floated into warm southern waters. So Leodogran hesitates to expose Guinevere to the risk of marrying a king who may soon be throneless.

248. **Victor** is the complementary object of *Report* in l. 249.

251. **be**: subjunctive.

252. **body**, power, *i.e.*, of himself and of his knights.

enow, enough. A.S. *genoꝝ* or *genoh*; Mid. E. *inoh*, *enogh*, *inowe*.

254. **all of one mind with him.** Arthur's knights are fully in accord with him and animated with the same high spirit, hence their perfect accord increases their strength.

257. **daïs**: a raised floor or low platform at the upper end of a baronial hall, reserved for those of highest rank in the company present. It was variously used to denote the chief seat at a nobleman's table or a canopy over such a seat. L. *discus*, a quoit, dish, table

259. **Who**: the antecedent is *we* (l. 258)

Note the impression of solemnity due to "low, deep tones."

260. **simple** contrasts with *great*.

261. **strait**, strict, rigorous. O.F. *estroit*, L. *strictus*, close, tight, drawn together. For the vows see Arthur's reply to Gareth—

"Make thee my knight? My knights are sworn to vows
Of utter hardihood, utter gentleness,
And, loving, utter faithfulness in love,
And uttermost obedience to the King."

—(*Gareth and Lynette*.)

263. **Were pale**, *i.e.*, from awe. They felt themselves in the presence of something more than human. Tristram, in the Last Tournament, says the King seemed no man, "but Michael trampling Satan."

264. **flush'd**, *i.e.*, burning with eagerness to fulfil the noble mission entrusted to them.

dazed, dazzled, confused, comprehending dimly.

265. A vivid image in homely terms of the sudden awakening of the soul hitherto wrapped in ignorance and self-indulgence. The knights are dazzled with the bright vision of the spiritual life to which they are pledged. This is described in *Guinevere*. They were to reverence their conscience, break the heathen, uphold Christ, not to speak slander or to listen to it, redress human wrongs, to respect their plighted faith, and to lead chaste lives.

267. **large**, lofty, noble. L. *largus*, abundant, bountiful, generous.

comfortable, comforting. The suffix *-able* has here an active force. Cf. Communion Service of Prayer Book, "Hear what *comfortable* words our Saviour, Christ, saith."

270. **A momentary likeness.** They have caught the enthusiasm of his spirit, and for the moment each face wears a similar look to the King's—the impress of a noble purpose.

273. **the casement**, *i.e.*, the painted window represented Christ on the Cross with those watching.

274. **Flame - colour, vert, azure**, red, green, blue. *Vert* (Fr. *vert*, green) and *azure* are terms used in heraldry. According to mediæval notions, these colours sometimes typified Love (red), Faith (blue), Charity (green). In the *Faerie Queene*, Book I., Faith wears white, Charity yellow, and Hope blue.

275. **three fair queens**. Cf. *The Passing of Arthur*, l. 366. The three queens who received Arthur into the barge at his passing were presumably those who were present at his crowning. According to Malory, the former three were Morgan le Fay (Arthur's half-sister), the Queen of Northgales, and the Queen of the Waste Lands. But here they probably symbolise Faith, Hope, and Charity, the three Christian virtues.

277. **tall**: attributive to *friends*, in l. 276.

278. **who**: the antecedent is *friends*, in l. 276.

279. **mage**. L. *magus*, a learned man, a philosopher, from Persian *maj*, a priest. Cf. *Magi*, the wise men from the East.

wit, intellect: the original sense of *wit* is intelligence, understanding. A.S. *witt*, understanding.

280. **winters**: an instance of synecdoche, a part of the year representing the whole year.

279-81. The power of Merlin is ascribed to two sources, *viz.*, natural ability and the accumulated experience of a long life. These never fail him, and by their means he can accomplish great tasks.

282. **the Lady of the Lake**. "So they rode till they [Arthur and Merlin] came to a lake . . . and in the midst of the lake Arthur was ware of an arm clothed in white samite that held a fair sword in that hand. . . . With that they saw a damsel going upon the lake. . . . 'That is the Lady of the Lake,' said Merlin, 'and within that lake is a rock, and therein is as fair a place as any on earth, and this damsel will come to you anon, and then speak ye fair to her that she will give you that sword.' "—(MALORY.)

The damsel gave the sword on condition that Arthur promised to give her a gift when she asked for it.

283. **a subtler magic**. Her power is that of the spirit, Merlin's that of the mind or intellect. The contrast is between the divine wisdom derived from religion, and the earthly wisdom gained by means of human talents and long observation of life. The former is pure and elevated, the latter, by comparison, stained and mean.

284 **samite**: a rich silk stuff, interwoven or embroidered with gold. O. Fr. *samit*, Gr. *hex*, six, and *mitos*, a thread.

285. **cross-hilted**. The epithet implies that the King is the champion of Christ against the heathen. Knights often used their sword-hilts as symbols of Christ's Cross when making solemn vows.

287. **incense**: a symbol for adoration.

288. **minster**, a cathedral church: originally a church belonging to a monastery.

287-8. The mist of incense and the dim twilight clothe with mystery the Lady's figure.

290. **A voice as of the waters**. Cf. "And I heard a voice from Heaven, as the voice of many waters" (Rev. xiv. 2).

291. **Down in a deep.** See note on l. 282.

293. (She) Hath power, etc.

294. **Excalibur.** "And there asked him a gift that he promise her when she (the Lady of the Lake) gave him the sword. 'That is sooth,' said Arthur, 'a gift I promised you, but I have forgotten the name of my sword that ye gave me.' 'The name of it,' said the lady, 'is Excalibur, that is as much to say as Cut-steel.'"—(MALORY)

The idea of enchanted swords was common in mediæval days. From the belief in their wonderful powers came the fashion of giving them proper names.

The heroes of mediæval romances were commonly provided with such weapons, scarcely less famous than their owners.

Cf. "It is the sword of a good knight,
Tho' homespun be his mail;
What matter if it be not hight (called)
Joyeuse, Colada, Durindale,
Excalibur, or Aroundight."—(LONGFELLOW).

La Joyeuse was the sword of Charlemagne, who like Arthur was the central figure of many romances; *Colada* belonged to the Cid, the national hero of Spain; *Durindale* or *Durindana* was the sword of the paladin Roland, chief of Charlemagne's peers; *Aroundight* belonged to Sir Lancelot du Lake.

297-8. **rich With jewels.** Cf. *Passing of Arthur*, ll. 224-6.

298. **elfin**, the work of elves or spirits.

Urim, Light: Cf. *Exodus* xxviii. 30.—"And thou shalt put in the breastplate of judgment the *Urim* and the *Thummim*; and they shall be upon Aaron's heart, when he goeth in before the Lord." Cf. also *Numbers* xxvii. 21.—"And he (Joshua) shall stand before Eleazar the priest who shall ask counsel for him after the judgment of *Urim* before the Lord."

The *Urim* and *Thummim* were mysterious ornaments worn by the Jewish High Priest when he entered the Holy of Holies. They were said to indicate in some way God's replies to the entreaties of the High Priest.

300. **are blinded.** Cf. *Passing of Arthur*, l. 305.

301. **(is) Graven.** The subject is "Take me" (l. 302)

304. **sad:** because of the injunction "Cast me away."

308. **beat his foemen down:** *Excalibur* represents the "sword of the spirit," the weapon with which Arthur will overcome the gross superstition and spiritual darkness that envelop the land. In *Malory*, where no spiritual power is attributed to *Excalibur*, but only magic properties, Arthur strikes some mighty blows with it, *e.g.*, he cut off the legs of a giant at one blow, and with another cut sheer through the head of a knight down to the breast.

310. **To sift:** Noun Infinitive, object of thought

311. **full eyes, etc.:** *eyes* = looks, an instance of metonymy: the usual position of *full* would be after the noun because of the complement "of question."

312-14 Leodogran's statement is really a question. He wishes to solve the question of Arthur's parentage, see ll. 238-40, and he thinks by

assuming that Bellicent is Arthur's sister, she may be led to say whether she is or not.

317. **These be secret things**, *i.e.*, there is a mystery concerning this, *i.e.*, her relationship to Arthur.

318. **let them be**, *i.e.*, leave herself and the king alone.

319-24. Note the different characters of the brothers. Gawain is full of the joy of life, sportive as a colt, and as heedless of serious things. Modred has the nature of the spy, and this trait is prophetic of the treachery that led him later to his doom when striving to wrest the crown from Arthur.

324. **Struck for the throne**. *Cf. Passing of Arthur*, ll. 165-9.

329-30. **fair . . . of men**. The suggestion is that Arthur has angelic fairness.

332. **A cry from out the dawning, etc.** Recollections of incidents in childhood are often more vivid than those of later incidents. The cry of her mother stills rings in Bellicent's ears.

333. (I hear) a mother weeping.

334. **had**: Subjunctive expressing a wish.

335. **To guard**: Gerundial Infinitive modifying *had*.

336. **Ay, etc.** Indeed, do you still recollect hearing such a cry?

337. **chance upon thee**, *i.e.*, meet thee. A verb of motion, *e.g.*, *to come*, may be understood.

341. **Whereof . . . guilty**: Adjective clause, qualifying 'fault.'

343-4. The description of her childish grief gives occasion to describe the consolation given by Arthur, an act significant of his manhood's mission.

346-7. **can walk Unseen**: a power commonly attributed to magicians. See *The Tempest*, in which Prospero wearing his magic mantle can walk invisible.

347. **he was at my side**: he (Arthur) appeared suddenly and she, childlike, neither knew nor cared whence he came.

348. **spake**: the older form of *spoke*.

360. **cry**. A metaphor signifying earnest entreaty.

361. **To hear**: A noun, infinitive, in apposition with 'cry.'

362. **Shrunk like a fairy changeling**. It was a common superstition that fairies, out of love for beauty, carried off beautiful children from their cradles, leaving ugly ones in their place. The changeling as the substitute was termed, was commonly puny in body, peevish and malicious in temper.

368. **still**: an instance of metonymy = dead.

371. Descriptive of the utter darkness of the night. Earth and sky were of the same hue.

372. **so high, etc.** A touch of observation. Seen from a height the sea appears to rise higher than the shore. Consequently the bright ship, amid the darkness, might seem to be in the sky. The apparent position of the ship suggests the heavenly origin and mission of Arthur. *Cf.* the brightness of the dragon ship with the "dusky barge dark as a funeral scarf" which bears Arthur after his last battle "to the island valley of Avilion."

379. **a ninth one.** There was a belief that the ninth wave was larger than those going before it.

380. **full of voices.** The voices of Nature i.e., of the wind and the sea, are frequently introduced by Tennyson Cf. l. 290. Mrs. Ritchie narrates that when five years old, as he ran down the garden one day, he made his first verse, "I hear a voice that's speaking in the wind."

383. (it) rode.

371-89. Compare Bellicent's tale of the miraculous advent of Arthur with Bedivere's.

386. **strand.** A.S. *seashore*.

390. **presently,** at once; a common meaning in Shakespeare.

391. **Free sky and stars:** a graphic phrase denoting by its causeness the sudden disappearance of the clouds.

392. **part,** i.e., depart Cf. "A' made a finer end and went away as it had been any christom child; a' *parted* even just between twelve and one, even at the turning of the tide." (Description of Sir John Falstaff's death, *Henry V.*)

394. **strait,** narrow; cf. the geographical term *strait*

pass. Death, as connecting this life and the hereafter, is compared to a defile or pass from one valley to another. The traveller once within the pass has lost sight of the country passed through and is not yet in sight of the scenes before him.

395. attributive to *seer* in l. 393.

399. **glory.** Cf. the wave was in a flame (l. 381)

400. **wont,** custom. A.S. *wunian*, to be accustomed to

401. **riddling triplets.** The nine lines following form three triplets—a triplet being three lines with the same rhyme.

riddling, of the nature of a riddle, obscure in meaning as a riddle.

Cf. *Gareth and Lynette* for the character of the riddling—

"Know ye not then the Riddling of the Bards?
Confusion and illusion and relation,
Elusion and occasion and evasion?"

of old time: an allusion to the ancient practice of the British Bards of delivering their poetic utterances in stanzas of three rhyming lines.

402-4. We see the effect of the rain and sun in the rainbow which follows; we see the growth of wisdom as man ages, but that growth is not continually progressive, for old age brings sometimes a wandering intellect. The latter is possibly in allusion to Bleys, but the implication, if the next lines are considered, seems to be that though we can observe the effects of the forces of Nature we can never attain a full knowledge of the operations of those forces.

405-7. A rainbow may present different aspects to different eyes, e.g., compare the poet's observations of a rainbow with those of the scientist. So in other matters, persons may differ in their views of the same thing and yet each view be truthful so far as it goes. Merlin concludes that there may be different views of Arthur's origin and yet each may stand as containing a truth since the whole truth cannot be known.

405. **lea.** A.S. *leah*, a meadow.

408-10. As none can know fully the mystery of the life of a flower, which blooms under the influence of rain and sun, so none can explain fully the mystery of Arthur's life. Whence he came, thither he will return. The before and after life are a deep that cannot be fathomed.

408. **blows**, blooms. A.S. *blawan*, to bloom. Cf. "I know a bank where the wild thyme *blows*" (*Midsummer Night's Dream*); also the phrase, "a full-blown rose," i.e., a rose in full bloom.

410. **deep**. Cf. "When that which drew from out the boundless deep
Turns again home" (*Crossing the Bar*).

Cf. also "And that his grave should be a mystery
From all men, like his birth" (*Guinevere*).

411. **thou**: subject of the imperative "*Fear*."

414. **dark sayings**, i.e., not clearly expressed, i.e., obscure traditions concerning Arthur.

415. Note the alliteration in *Ranging* and *ringing*. *Ranging* is moving, passing. *Ring* suggests the strong impression of the traditions.

417. **wage-work**: an alliterative compound expressing concisely the meaning of a sentence.

418. (will) **Speak**: the subject is *sayings* in l. 414.

421. **to come**: Gerundial Infinitive modifying *pass*.

422. (will) **smite**: the subject is (*he*). The second coming of Arthur is spoken of by Malory: "Yet some men yet say . . . that King Arthur is not dead but had, by the will of our Lord Jesu, in another place. And men say that he shall come again and he shall win the holy cross. . . . But many say that there is written upon his tomb the verse, *Hic jacet Arthurus Rex, quondam Rexque futurus*" [Here lies King Arthur, once King and to be (King again)].

426. **drowsed**, became sleepy. A line full of alliteration. A.S. *dreosan*, to fall, to drop.

427-43. A picture made of graphic touches. Each detail is suggestive and so well chosen and expressed as to present to the imagination a vivid picture of war's ravage.

429. **Haze-hidden**: a similar alliterative compound to *wage-work* in l. 417. The charge that the English language has lost the power of forming compounds might easily be refuted by examples chosen from Tennyson's works.

429-30. **phantom king, looming, lost** are suggestive of the mystery that envelops Arthur's birth.

phantom, an apparition, a vision. Gr. *phaino*, to show.

431. **hind**. A.S. *hind*, a servant. Now a poetic term for "a farm labourer."

was driven, i.e., driven off by the plundering soldiers after slaying the hinds who guarded them.

432. **glimpsed**: a noun used as a verb. It denotes graphically the appearance of fire here and there in the landscape, now appearing, now disappearing.

433-6. **Stream'd In drifts of smoke, etc.** The wind rolled the smoke up to the peak, hiding still more the phantom king. But he made his

presence known. So Arthur, though apparently threatened with extinction by heathen hordes and jealous fellow-kings, would not be entirely overcome.

437. **one**: an indefinite pronoun.

440. **with a wink**. *Cf. in a twinkling*. the change is as quick as a wink of the eyelid.

441-2. The earth disappeared, covered by the descending haze, but the figure of the King stood out clear in the heaven. The vision is prophetic of Arthur's complete triumph over his enemies, and of the greater glory that shall be his when his day on earth is done.

445. **yea**. A.S. *gea*, yes. *Yes* is A.S. *gese*, a strengthened form of *gea*.

447. **Sir Lancelot**: objective case in apposition with *warrior*.

449. The mention of the flowers is in keeping with Lancelot's mission.

452. **Dubric**: Archbishop of Caerleon-upon-Usk. In Roman times Caerleon was an important frontier post, ranking with Chester and York. Malory does not mention Dubric.

454. **The stateliest, etc.** "Then was the high feast made ready, and the king was wedded at Camelot to Dame Guenever in the church of St Stephen's with great solemnity"—(MALORY.)

456. **The fair beginners, etc.** The knights are to aid Arthur in that work which he believed he could better accomplish with Guinevere as his wife (see ll. 92-3).

459-61. The repetition of May with its associations is partly to emphasise the brightness of the scene, partly to emphasise the dawn of a nobler time. The poets have often associated May with love and marriage.

462. **all earth's beauty**: a hyperbole or exaggeration expressive of Guinevere's surpassing fairness; *cf.* l. 3.

463. **Roll'd**: the subject is *incense*.

464. **A voice as of the waters**. *Cf.* l. 290.

466. **doom**, fate; the state to which one is doomed or destined. A.S. *dom*, judgment.

467. **Let chance, etc.** See note on l. 133.

468. **with drooping eyes**: possibly from maiden modesty; possibly a hint of the feeling that she was no fit mate for one so "high, self-contained, and passionless."

472. **Other**, different from what it is now.

476. **Great Lords from Rome**. Malory relates that after Arthur had had long war, he held a royal feast and Table Round with his allies of kings and princes. There entered twelve ancient men, bearing each an olive branch in token of being ambassadors. These demanded, in the name of Emperor Lucius, the tribute that Arthur's forerunners had paid to Rome. Arthur, after holding a council, replied that he owed no tribute, but by the right of his predecessors he claimed possession of the empire of Rome from Lucius. Later he fought Lucius and cleft him to the breastbone with a blow of Excalibur.

478-9. **all on fire With sun and gold**: a phrase beautiful in sound and colour.

480. **knighthood**, knights; an abstract term used for a concrete.

488. **That God . . . secret word**, that the king is directly inspired by God. *Cf.* l. 500.

491. **live, die**: Subjunctives used to express a wish.

493-4. **if thou diest**. If death comes to them, their consolation is that they are doing their duty to their King, whose purposes are always lofty.

504. **The slowly-fading mistress, etc.** The lingering sound of "slowly-fading" emphasises the sense. About 410 A.D. the Roman Emperor, Honorius, refused to send back any troops to defend Britain from the Picts, Scots, and Saxons. Since 362 A.D. the barbarians had been pressing on the Empire, and the outlying provinces had to be abandoned.

505. **yore**. A.S. *geara*, of years; genitive plural of *gear*, year.

508. **The old order, etc.** *Cf.* l. 408 of *The Passing of Arthur*.

511. **your Roman wall**. Julius Agricola (78-85 A.D.) made a chain of forts from the Forth to the Clyde. The Emperor Hadrian, some forty years later, built a stone wall from Carlisle to Newcastle, eighty miles long, and strengthened it with forts manned by Spanish, Thracian, and other soldiers. Twenty years later, in the reign of Emperor Antoninus, a trench and an earthen rampart were traced from the Forth to the Clyde. In 208-10 the Emperor Severus added another wall in the vicinity of Hadrian's. All these were intended to repress the invasions of the Caledonians.

514. **for a space**: forecasting the entrance of sin into the Order of the Round Table, beginning with the sin of Guinevere and Lancelot, followed by that of Tristram and Isolt, and spreading to others.

THE PASSING OF ARTHUR.

1. **That story**: *story* has no verb. Probably the sentence is elliptical and might run thus (This is) that story.

The story meant is the tale of the *Passing of Arthur*.

bold: the usual epithet for Bedivere: *Cf.* *Coming of Arthur*, l. 175.

2. **First made**: *Cf.* *Coming of Arthur*, l. 173.

latest left. Bedivere is the only knight with Arthur when he "passes." *Cf.* ll. 172-3.

"Until King Arthur's Table, man by man,
Had fallen in Lyonesse about their lord,
King Arthur."

3. **the man**, *i.e.*, Bedivere.

no more than a voice: indicative of his great age; his voice was the only mark of vitality left him.

4. **white winter**. Winter by metaphor symbolises old age as spring does youth. The epithet white intensifies the description and denotes strongly the extreme age of Bedivere, since he scarcely shows signs of life.

Cf. "Therefore my age is as a lusty winter,
Frosty but kindly."—(*As You Like It*.)

5 **new faces, other minds.** Bedivere has outlived his own generation and finds himself among new companions with other ideas than those of his youth. Cf. l. 406.

6. **to westward,** *i.e.*, to meet Modred, Arthur's nephew, who was in revolt against the king.

9-11. Arthur could see clearly the signs of God's greatness and goodness in the stars, and the fruitfulness of the earth, but he confesses his failure to read God's purpose in His treatment of men. Arthur has waged God's wars, worked His will, but all in vain. His reward is treachery in wife and friend, the sight of his country sinking into the slough of bestiality from which he had for a time rescued it. Such an end to his efforts perplexes him and shakes his belief.

13. **me:** Exclamatory object.

14. **lesser god.** The apparent inefficacy of divine control suggests to Arthur that the deity ruling the world is but an inferior whose powers are limited, and that the world will reach perfection only when the supreme deity himself undertakes the control of it.

15. **But (as if he) had not force, etc.** Adverbial clause of condition in adversative co-ordination with "*As if some lesser god,*" etc.

14-17. The same thought is developed in *The Ancient Sage*:—

"That none but Gods could build this house of ours,
So beautiful, vast, various, so beyond
All work of man, yet, like all work of man,
A beauty with defect—till That which knows,
And is not known, but felt thro' what we feel
Within ourselves is highest, shall descend
On this half-deed, and shape it at the last
According to the Highest in the Highest." *L. 14-17, 21*

19. **dense,** unable to perceive or distinguish clearly.

19-21. Cf. Cowper's lines:—

"Blind unbelief is sure to err
And scan His work in vain."

Also, "For now we see through a glass darkly" (*1 Cor.* xiii. 12), and "For we know in part and we prophesy in part" (*ibid.* 9); also *The Ancient Sage*:—

"The world is dark with griefs and graves,
So dark that men cry out against the Heavens;
Who knows but that the darkness is in man?"

23. **stricken:** former past participle of *to strike*.

24. **wife and friend:** Guinevere and Lancelot. On these he had relied most for support; they had betrayed his trust and thus ruined his peace of mind.

26. **Reels back into the beast:** "reels" suggests the want of guidance. The realm now lacks the shining example of the Knights of the Round Table, whose fair fame is smirched by sin, and it will relapse into its former bestial condition.

27. This bitter cry recalls Christ's "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?"

28. **I pass but shall not die.** Arthur takes comfort amid his despair from Merlin's prophecy, see *Coming of Arthur*, ll. 419-21.

29. **weird.** The epithet is justified by the unearthly circumstances of Arthur's last fight; see ll. 90-135. A.S. *wyrd*, fate.

30. **Gawain:** the nephew of Arthur, being son of Bellicent, wife of King Lot, of Orkney. Modred, the traitor, whom Arthur is about to fight, was Gawain's brother.

31. **In Lancelot's war.** In Malory it says that after the sin of Lancelot and Guinevere, Arthur condemned the queen to be burnt. Lancelot rescued her, and in doing so killed many knights, among them two brothers of Gawain. Arthur made war on Lancelot, and Gawain met Lancelot in single combat. Lancelot wounded Gawain. Upon recovery, Gawain sought out Lancelot and fought again, only to be wounded in the same place. Then came the first fight with Modred, who had been crowned King of England. In this Gawain is struck on the old wound and dies.

31-2. **the ghost, etc.** "And then he (Arthur) fell on slumbering again . . . there came Sir Gawaine unto him . . . 'Sir,' said Sir Gawaine. . . 'thus much had God given me leave for to warn you of your death; for and ye fight as to-morn (to-morrow) with Sir Mordred . . . doubt ye not ye must be slain, and the most part of your people on both parties.'"—(MALORY.)

blown, etc. In Virgil's *Aeneid VI.* 740, the spirits of the dead are said to be purified of earthly stain by exposure to the viewless winds.

33. **shrilling, i.e.,** crying piercingly.

Hollow, hollow, etc. Gawain's spirit repents his devotion in life to earthly pleasures. Cf. *Eccles.* i. 2—"Vanity of vanities, saith the preacher; vanity of vanities; all is vanity."

35. **an isle of rest:** the island valley of Avilion, see l. 427.

38. **fainter onward:** extension of predicate *Shrill'd* (l. 41).

like wild birds, etc., like birds that migrate to warmer climes when summer here is ended. The cries of such birds at night are weird and mournful, and formerly there was, in country places, a superstition that the cries were the wailing of spirits.

39. **way:** Adverbial object, modifying *wail*.

41. **Shrill'd.** The force of the word is increased by the caesura or break marked by the semi-colon.

42-5. Significant of the mourning and despair that will follow the loss of Arthur.

48. **all that haunts, etc.:** *wild* is an adjective used as noun. In *Guinevere* the spirits and elves are said to rejoice when the order of the Round Table was formed. They mourn because a realm which "reels back into the beast" is no fit abode for them.

49. **it:** the antecedent is *all* (l. 48). The spirits, fairies, etc., which have gladly made Arthur's realm their abode, while his bright reign lasted, will pass from it with him.

51. **let pass whatever will.** For the construction see note on l. 133, *Coming of Arthur*.

52. Elves, and the harmless glamour, etc. Bedivere is a practical man, lacking imagination and impatient of flights of fancy in others. He does not believe in the powers of spirits.

glamour, bewitchment properly a bewitchment of the sight by which things appear different from what they are.

field: here used for the country as opposed to the town. Tales of witchcraft and fairy miracles are not the product of towns, but of the open country.

54. To all high places. Probably in allusion to the association of Arthur's name with certain hills in Britain, *e.g.*, Arthur's Seat, the end of the Pentlands, nearest to Edinburgh. In a book written by Gervase of Tilbury (13th century), a legend is told of Arthur which describes him as resting on Mt. Etna (Sicily) after his final battle.

Light was Gawain, i.e., dighty, untrustworthy. In *The Coming of Arthur*, Gawain is described—"ran like a colt and leapt at all he saw." In *Gereth and Lyette*, he is a knight of prowess and his shield in Arthur's hall is "blazon'd rich and bright" in token of his deeds. But in *Lancelot and Elaine*, a slur is cast on him, he is "not often loyal to his word," he is the "fine Gawain," courteous, but "courtesy with a touch of traitor in it." In the *Holy Grail*, Gawain wearies of the quest and spends his time in amusement. He is blind to holy things. Finally Pelleas, in *Pelleas and Ettarre*, finding that Gawain has won Ettarre from him, calls him false—"Alas that ever knight should be so false."

59. I hear the steps. An exaggeration to represent impressively the nearness of the battle and the need of preparation.

Modred: son of King Lot of Orkney and Bellicent, therefore Arthur's nephew. He is the chief villain of the *Idylls* and the contrast to Arthur. For his character, see Introduction.

in the west. In Malory, we read that after Mordred had got himself crowned King of England upon a false report of Arthur's death, Arthur returned, landed at Dover in spite of Mordred's resistance, and beat Mordred later at Barham Down, near Canterbury. Later Mordred gathered forces and Arthur went westward to Salisbury to meet him. When they met to arrange a treaty dividing the kingdom, an accident started a battle in which Mordred and Arthur killed each other.

61-2. grosser grown than heathen. The knights fallen into sin had become more wicked than the heathen who had never known the truth. Cf. *St. Matthew* xii 44, 45—"And when he is come he findeth it empty, swept and garnished. Then goeth he and taketh with himself seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there: and the last state of that man (i.e., the man who relapses into sin) is worse than the first."

63. Right well, etc. A reference to the doubts of Arthur's right to be king. The question is fully treated in the *Coming of Arthur*.

66. other, different in character. This battle in the west is civil strife between Arthur and his own people, while the former battles were on behalf of the realm against external foes.

68. fought with Rome. This war resulted from Arthur's refusing to pay tribute to Rome: see *Coming of Arthur*, ll. 503-13.

69. **heathen**, the Caledonians, *i.e.*, Picts and Scots. For note on the Roman wall, see *Coming of Arthur*, l. 511.

70. **Ill doom**, unfortunate fate or lot. The evil fortune is the necessity of warring with his people.

71. **To war, etc.**: a phrase explanatory of *Ill doom* and acting as a noun in apposition with *doom*.

72. **fights himself**. The king is the chosen representative of his people, their interests are his, and in inflicting injury on them, he is injuring his own power and welfare.

73. **They—my knights**: a subject without a verb, owing to change of construction.

76. **blind haze**: a metaphor. As a haze obscures the view and hinders clear sight, so doubt, perplexity, and anxiety now confuse the workings of Arthur's mind and prevent him from forming definite plans for the future. *Blind* may be an instance of transferred epithet, *i.e.*, the haze that makes me blind, or a proleptic use, *i.e.*, the haze that blinds.

77. **One lying, etc.** After Modred's discovery of her sin, Guinevere fled to a holy house at Almesbury. There Arthur visited her to forgive and to bid her a life-long farewell.

“Then on a sudden a cry, ‘The King.’ She sat
Stiff-stricken, listening; but when armed feet
Thro’ the long gallery from the outer doors
Rang coming, prone from off her seat she fell,
And grovell’d with her face against the floor.”

Almesbury or Amesbury, near Salisbury and Stonehenge.

78. **Hath folded in, etc.** A man's path in life is compared to passes through mountains. Just as the traveller through a pass cannot see far ahead, so man cannot see far into the future. Arthur's path is further obscured by the “blind haze,” which, like a wall, obstructs the view.

81. **sunset bound**, the western boundary.

Lyonnesse: a legendary district, said to have joined the present county of Cornwall to the Scilly Islands.

82. **upheaven**, upheaved. *Heave* was originally a strong verb, A.S. *hebban*, past part. *hafen* or *haefen*.

83. **By fire**, by volcanic agency.

84. **fragments, etc.**, remnants of tribes or nations of different races, whose history is no longer known.

87. **phantom circle**: the circle of the horizon, which, like a phantom, is an appearance only and has no reality.

89. (could) no further fly (from) the King.

91. **Burn'd at his lowest**, *i.e.*, at midwinter, when the sun's height above the horizon is the least during the year, and its rays falling obliquely give the least heat. The scene of Arthur's fall is painted in the darkest colours—Midwinter, a waste sand by the waste sea, a chilling death-white mist, harmonise with ruined hopes and a broken heart.

92. **waste**. A.S. *weste*, from L. *vastus*, empty. Hence *vast* and *waste* are doublets.

95. **death-white mist, etc.** What a different scene from Arthur's first battle, when "all was so clear that he saw the smallest rock far on the faintest hill!"

98. **With formless fear,** a fear that could not be attributed to any real cause; a vague presentiment of coming ill due to the depressing influence of the chilly mist.

103. **old ghosts,** the spirits of those long since dead.

106. In single fights sometimes chance gave the victory, sometimes craft, sometimes strength.

107-17. A vivid description of the confused incidents of a disorderly and deadly conflict. The absence of regularly constructed sentences, the use of onomatopoeic words, *e.g.*, *shocks*, *splintering*, *clash*, *crash*, the use of hard sounds, *e.g.*, *sp* and *r*, all serve to deepen the impression of the fury and confused turmoil of the fight.

114. **monstrous blasphemies,** *i.e.*, against Christ. The blasphemers were the heathen and the recreant knights, "grosser grown than heathen, spitting at their vows and thee."

115. **labouring of the lungs,** the hard panting of exhausted warriors.

119. **or thro' death:** *or*—either. The phrase is an extension of the predicate *follows*, denoting cause.

121. **seething.** A.S. *seothan*, to boil. Now chiefly a poetic term. The alliteration of the *s* in this line is imitative of the sound.

122. **dolorous,** mournful. L. *dolor*, grief, pain.

123. **falling** may be taken as a gerund with *twilight* as adjective or as a present participle qualifying *day*.

126. **pale King:** the epithet *pale* is in keeping with the other epithets, *dolorous*, *drearier*, *bitter*, that give the colour of this grim scene.

129 **wan.** A.S. *wann*, dark; the dark pallor of death. The wan wave is the tide which rolls among the dead and renders the scene more ghastly by giving apparent motion to lifeless limbs.

133. **shiver'd brands.** broken swords: *shiver'd* is a past participle **that once, etc.** A contrast between their present uselessness and the former deeds they had wrought.

135. **The voice, etc.** The sea is taken as a symbol of Eternity.

140. **wastes the narrow realm:** a reference to the inroads that the sea makes on the coast.

142-6. **as tho' they had not died for me, etc.** The imaginative spirit of Arthur regards the beating of the waves on his dead warriors as an insult to the hallowed dead—holy because of their devotion to himself and his divine work. The forces of Nature, hitherto appearing to be in sympathy, seem now to his disconsolate spirit to be arrayed against him; the doubt felt before the fight rises in greater strength, and his faith in his divinely appointed mission is shattered.

147-53. Bedivere, loyal and unimaginative, wastes no time in useless regret for what cannot be undone. Enough for him that Arthur still lives, and that there is work to be done in punishing the traitor Modred.

148. **and so,** if it be so (that). *And* or *on* meaning *if* was frequent in Elizabethan times.

Cf. "There's her cousin, an she were not possessed with a fury, exceeds her as much in beauty," etc.—*Much Ado*.

154. **doom**, properly judgment, hence used for fate, destiny, and further specialised to denote the ruin that results from a malign destiny.

155. call not this traitor a member of my house.

157. **My house, etc.** *Cf. St. Luke* viii. 21.—"My mother and my brethren are these which hear the word of God and do it."

159. **well for thee**, it speaks well for thee, *i.e.*, for Bedivere's loyalty.

saying: present participle qualifying *thee*.

dark hour, this present hour when all seems dark, without a ray of hope or comfort.

160. **the purport**, purpose, design.

throne: used as a symbol for reign: an instance of metonymy.

161. **quick**, living. A.S. *cwic*, alive.

168. **Excalibur**: see note on l. 294, *Coming of Arthur*.

✓ 170-74. These lines were the beginning of the *Morte d'Arthur* when it first appeared in a collection. Later this original sketch was expanded and published with the other Idylls in 1859, etc. The lines as used here serve as a summary of the battle.

172. **Table**, the Table Round. See note on l. 17, *Coming of Arthur*.

177. **A broken chancel**. The chancel is the eastern portion of a church and contains the altar. The broken (ruined) chancel and broken cross are appropriate to the ruin of Arthur's reign, and this symbolism is further emphasised by the "dark strait of barren land."

178. **strait**: commonly applied to a narrow water passage joining two larger pieces of water. O.Fr. *estreit*, narrow, from L. *strictus*, drawn closely together.

182. **the sequel**, the result, consequence. L. *sequor*, to follow.

unsolders: a strong term expressive of the complete separation of parts previously closely united.

184. **Whereof the world holds record**: an adjectival clause to *fellowship*.

sleep: a common euphemism for death.

189. **Camelot**: identified with the village of Queen Camel in Somerset, where the traces of an ancient town still exist. There are in the neighbourhood a bridge and a well, known as Arthur's Bridge and Arthur's Well. *Cf. Gareth and Lynette*:—

"Camelot, a city of shadowy palaces
And stately, rich in emblem and the work
Of ancient kings who did their days in stone."

190. **I perish, etc.** My ruin is caused by those whom I formed into a nation. In the *Coming of Arthur* we learn that Arthur's predecessors failed to make the kingdom one, and he first "drew all their petty princedoms under him . . . and made a realm and reigned."

191. **Merlin**: see note on l. 150, *Coming of Arthur*.

192. **be**: a verb of complete predication = happen. For the construction of *let what will be*, *be*, see note on l. 133, *Coming of Arthur*.

197, etc. For the account of how Arthur got Excalibur, see *The Coming of Arthur*, ll. 294-309, and the notes thereon.

202. **I am sung or told**, wherever songs or tales of my deeds are composed in days to come. Arthur predicts his own future fame. Such a prediction is the figure of speech known as vision. Cf. *Julius Caesar*, where Cassius, after the assassination of Caesar, exclaims—

"How many ages hence
Shall this our lofty scene be acted over
In states unborn and accents yet unknown?"

205. **fling him**: a personification of Excalibur, due probably to its magic qualities.

the middle mere: a Latinism for the middle of the mere.

mere, a lake or a pond. A.S. *mere*, a sea, lake.

206. **lightly**, quickly.

208. **meet**, fitting, right. A.S. *metan*, to measure, from which also comes *mete*.

211. **hest**, command. A.S. *hæts*, command.

all, entirely: an adverb.

at full, to the full, thoroughly.

212. (I will) Watch what I see.

214. **athwart**, across.

216. **Old knights**, knights of old.

217. **Shrill, chill, with flakes of foam** (spray): a terse and realistic description.

218. **By zigzag paths, etc.** The sound is imitative of the sense, and the change from the rugged path, with its abrupt turns, to the scene of the bright, level lake is well marked by the transition from the jerky rhythm of l. 218 to the smooth march of l. 219, due to the open vowels and the liquid letter *l*.

219. **levels**. The surface of the lake would be at the same level. Perhaps the use of the plural may be meant to suggest that parts of the lake surface shone and parts were in shadow.

222. **ran forth**, emerged suddenly.

223. **sparkled keen with frost**: *keen* has the sense of piercing, sharp, as opposed to dim, hazy. The moonlight was brighter and more sharply defined owing to the frosty clearness of the air, due to the absence of moisture.

224. **haft**, handle or hilt.

diamond sparks, the light reflected from diamonds.

225. **Myriads**. Gr. *myrios*, ten thousand, hence innumerable. A natural exaggeration to emphasise the beauty of the hilt.

topaz: a gem, generally yellowish, but found in various colours.

jacinth: another form of *hyacinth*: a gem with the purple colour of the hyacinth.

226. **subtlest jewellery**: the work of ornamentation had been done skilfully and delicately. Cf. "rich with jewels, elfin Urim" (*Coming of Arthur*, l. 298).

228. **dividing the swift mind.** Thoughts pass rapidly through his mind, whether it is better to keep Excalibur or to throw it in the lake. The line is a translation of one in Virgil's *Æneid*, IV. 285, and repeated in VIII. 20, in both instances denoting inability to decide between alternatives. Bedivere's reluctance is explained in ll. 254-78.

229. **In act to throw,** while preparing to throw.

231. **many-knotted:** a realistic touch of description, showing observation of nature.

waterflags: plants with a bladed leaf, similar to the Iris.

232. **whistled stiff and dry.** Being stiff and dry, their motion, due to the wind and waves, made a whistling sound. Tennyson's acquaintance with the fens had given him opportunities of observing water-plants.

marge: a poetic form of *margin*.

233. The slowness of the march of the verse emphasises the sense.

238-9. **washing** appropriately describes the sound of water passing through reeds, just as *lapping*, a sharper sound, is suitable to the sound of water meeting rock.

241. **betray'd thy nature and thy name.** Bedivere has belied his bold nature, his loyalty to his king, and his honour as a knight by not performing his mission, and by returning an evasive answer.

242. **beseem'd,** fitted, was becoming to: the prefix *be-* has converted the intransitive verb *seem* into the transitive *beseem*.

243. **fealty:** a doublet of *fidelity*. Both come from L. *fidelitas*, faithfulness.

244-5. **hand, voice, motion** are explanatory of *sign*. They may be regarded as subjects of alternative clauses, *i.e.*, either a hand would have been shown or a voice heard, or a motion of the mere seen, if Bedivere had flung the sword in.

248. **lief.** A.S. *leof*, dear, beloved. It means the same as *dear*. Tennyson is said to have purposely used such archaic terms as *lief* in *The Coming and Passing of Arthur*.

249. **lightly,** quickly.

252. **Counting the dewy pebbles:** *dewy* is an ornamental epithet. In moments of great stress of feeling or emotion, when the mind seems benumbed with contemplation, trivial objects often make a deep impression. Tennyson notes this psychological truth in *Maud* (ll. 1029-36).

253. **the wonder of the hilt:** a hendiadys for *the wonderful hilt*.

254. The use of *strangely* seems to show that *curiously* is used in its original sense of *carefully*, *i.e.*, skilfully.

chased, engraved, *i.e.*, with a pattern cut into it.

How . . . chased: attributive to *hilt*.

257. **one worthy note,** *i.e.*, worthy of fame, deserving to be known to future ages.

258. **Should be lost.** The use of *should* here as the auxiliary of the subjunctive, instead of *would*, seems emphatic, *i.e.*, must be lost without any hope of its return.

260. **should follow:** *should* again is emphatic, as if denoting a question in Bedivere's mind, *i.e.*, What good can be expected to follow?

261. Elliptical sentences. What harm (should follow) if (thou were left) undone? (It is) deep harm to disobey.

262. **Seeing**: a present participle used absolutely. It may be taken as equivalent to a preposition followed by a noun clause, *obedience*, etc. For this use cf. the uses of *concerning*, *respecting*, when followed by nouns. Or if *Seeing* be taken as equivalent to *since*, *because*, then it does the work of a conjunction.

bond of rule, the bond or tie which allows rule or government to be maintained. Obedience binds subjects to the king; if they fail to obey, government is impossible.

264. **against himself**, i.e., against the king's own interests. Possibly Bedivere thinks that the retention of Excalibur for the admiration of posterity will increase Arthur's fame.

267. **be**, remain. **aftertime**, posterity.

empty breath, useless, unconvincing tales: *breath* put for *words* by metonymy

268. **rumours of a doubt**, i.e., rumours that would be regarded as doubtful. Legends of Arthur that would not be credited.

270. **joust or just**, an encounter of knights in time of peace to display their prowess in arms. L. *jutta*, nigh to.

272. **Wrought**, worked, fashioned. The old past participle of *work*, now chiefly used as an adjective Cf. *wrought iron*.

maiden of the Lake. See *Coming of Arthur*, l. 282.

274. **hidden bases**, the bases of the hills hidden under the waters of the lake.

276. **winning reverence**, earning respect for himself and for Arthur.

277. **were lost**, would be lost. *Were* is the subjunctive of a principal clause, the subordinate conditional clause being understood, i.e., if the sword were thrown in.

278. **clouded with his own conceit**: *conceit* = notion, conception. Bedivere's idea of preserving Arthur's fame prevents him from seeing what is the right thing to do.

287. **miserable**, worthless.

288. **Woe is me**: A sentence used as interjection to express strong feeling. *Woe* is from A.S. *wa* (woe), an interjection. *Me* is the usual objective case of exclamation. Cf. *Ah me* and *I fear me*.

289. **Authority forgets a dying king**. Authority is personified and *king* is the object of *forgets*. The sense is that a dying king does not inspire awe and loses his royal influence. Authority is pictured as a creature which serves the king when in health and abandons him when dying.

290. **widow'd**, deprived: L. *viduus*, deprived or bereft of.

291. **bow'd the will**, i.e., the will of his subjects.

thee: unnecessary to the construction

what thou art, what is thy nature

293. **offices**, duties. L. *officium*, duty.

296. **giddy pleasure of the eyes**, that which pleases the eye without regard to worth. *Giddy* conveys the idea of inconstancy, want of trustworthiness.

297. **for**, since.

300. **with my hands**. This detail adds force to the king's threat. Feeble as he is, he will himself inflict punishment on Bedivere for his traitorous conduct.

301-4. Note the quick movement of the verses imitative of Bedivere's rapid actions. Bedivere hurries for fear delay may give the temptation time to overcome him.

304. **wheel'd**, swung.

305. **Made lightnings**, flashed like lightning. An hyperbole justified by the extraordinary importance and significance of Excalibur.

splendour. L. *splendor*, lustre, brilliance, brightness.

307. **streamer of the northern morn**: the Aurora Borealis or northern lights, frequent in northern latitudes and usually visible in streams of light ascending to the zenith of the sky from a point below the horizon.

308. **isles of winter**, icebergs. A descriptive phrase that adds dignity to the thing denoted.

shock: a forcible term for "come into collision."

311. **he**: Excalibur is personified.

dipt: omission of *below* for the sake of terseness.

315. **the other**, *i.e.*, Bedivere. The use of *other* (the second of two persons or things) is justified by the personification of Excalibur. One faithful servant (Excalibur) of Arthur goes, the other returns.

316. **drawing thicker breath**, breathing more heavily as his strength fails.

317. **Now see I, etc.** Bedivere's joy at having mastered temptation shows in his looks.

321. **blind my purpose**. If he looked at the gems, the sight would give rise to the temptation to retain them, and this temptation would intervene between his purpose of obeying Arthur and the fulfilment of it.

337. **wistfully**, with sad longing.

338. **As in a picture**, as the eyes in a picture, *i.e.*, with a far-off look.

339. **Remorsefully**: remorse because of his disobedience.

345. **nightmare**: the sense of oppression and helplessness felt sometimes when asleep and usually accompanied by horrible dreams.

350. **Clothed with his breath**. The condensed moisture of his breath formed a mist that surrounded him.

351. **Larger than human**. The apparent increase in size was the effect of the vapour.

352. **the deep**, the sea.

a cry: probably the cry of those awaiting Arthur, l. 367.

353. **like a goad**. Keen remorse for disobedience and fear that the King would die before he reached the lake, urged Bedivere on as the sharp pointed goad urges on a ploughing team of oxen.

354-60. This passage illustrates the poet's great power of selecting words to suit his purpose. We can in imagination see plainly and hear the armed man stumbling along the rocky path, and we can see the shining expanse of the level lake. The effect is produced by the change from short syllables, narrow vowels—mainly short *a*, *i*, *u*—hard con-

sonants—*b*, *g* (*k* sound), *g*, *r*—to the open *a*, *u*, and the liquid *l* of ll 359-60.

354. **harness**, armour.

356. **based**, fixed, planted.

358. **dint**, A.S. *dynt*, a blow. **armed**, iron-shod.

360. **long glories**: the long beams of glorious moonlight shining on the lake surface.

361. **hove**: a nautical term for 'appeared,' past tense of *heave*.

363. **ware**, aware.

364. **dense**, thickly crowded.

365. **Black-stoled**, wearing long black robes. *L. stola* (Gr. *stole*), a robe worn by Roman matrons, reaching from neck to ankles.

like a dream, appearing unreal as figures seen in a dream.

366. **Three Queens**. See *Coming of Arthur*, l. 275 and the note.

367. **shiver'd to the tingling stars**: a piercing cry that penetrated to the stars, which quivered as if in sympathy with the mourners. *Tingling stars* is a personification and the whole line an hyperbole that may perhaps be justified by the supernatural character of the mourners and the overwhelming disaster that caused their grief.

361-7. *Cf.* Malory's account. "And when they were at the water side, even fast by the bank hove a little barge with many fair ladies in it, and among them all was a queen, and all they had black hoods, and all they wept and shrieked when they saw King Arthur."

368-9. **agony Of lamentation**, mourning that exhibited the extreme of grief.

369. **shrills**, wails piercingly

369-71. No sound could well be more painful than the unearthly wailing of the wind in a desert, and the added notion of utter desolation harmonises with the deep woe of the mourners.

376. **laid his head, etc.** *Cf.* Malory: "And there received him three queens with great mourning, and so they set him down, and in one of their laps King Arthur laid his head, and then that queen (Morgan le Fay) said 'Ah, dear brother, why have ye tarried so long from me? Alas! this wound on your head hath caught over much cold'."

377. **casque**, helmet. *Sp. casco*, a skull.

381. **wither'd**, faded. The pale light of the moon fades away before the brighter light of the rising sun.

382. **Smote**: a warlike term suggesting that the moon is attacked and vanquished by a more powerful foe

springing east, *i.e.*, that springs from the east: fresh contrasts with withered and with springing denotes the greater force of the sunlight.

383. **greaves**, armour for the legs.

cuisses, armour for the thighs, from *L. coxa*, hip; *Fr. cuisse*, thigh

384. **onset**, *i.e.*, fighting, warfare; it is used figuratively for the blood which has been shed in fighting. There is a poetic gain in using the wider term, as it is less commonplace and more suggestive than blood.

light and lustrous curls, *i.e.*, fair and bright. See *Coming of Arthur*, ll. 329-30:—

“but this King is fair Beyond the race of Britons and of men.”

385. The bright curls sarrounded his forehead as bright beams do the rising sun.

386. **dais-throne**, the throne placed on a dais or platform.

parch'd, dry and therefore deprived of their brightness.

387. **clotted into points**, matted, probably with blood.

388. **knightly growth**, the hair on his face: the epithet *knightly* is hardly justifiable and the expression is bombastic.

2-390 **lance in rest**, lance fixed and pointed towards his opponent.

391. **a star**, *i.e.*, a star in brilliancy.

392. **Shot thro' the lists**, shot like a meteor or shooting star.

lists, ground enclosed for a tournament. Fr. *lice*, lists; L. *liciae*, barriers.

396. **my forehead, etc.** *i.e.*, his face. Perhaps Bedivere thinks some disgrace may attach to him for having survived so noble a king. Solitude, he thinks, is best for the survivor of a golden age now ended.

398. **chance**, adventure. The romantic love of adventure was in reality a feature of Norman chivalry and not of British character.

400. **the light, etc.** the star that led the Wise Men to Christ's cradle in Bethlehem. Bedivere is not thinking now of the chivalrous aspect of Arthur's reign, but of the King's work in rescuing the people from ignorance and sin.

403. **an image of the mighty world**. The ancients believed that the world was a circular surface surrounded by ocean. Cf. Malory: “Also Merlin made the Round Table in tokening of the roundness of the world, for by the Round Table is the world signified by right” (rightly).

405. **the days darken, etc.**: the future seems gloomy.

406. **other minds**, minds different in character, not cast in the same heroic mould as those of Arthur's knights.

408. **The old order, etc.**: an oft-quoted line. (See *Coming of Arthur*, l. 508).

409-10. **God fulfils, etc.**: God has various methods of fulfilling His purposes, and He causes the changes that mark different ages because of the weakness of man, who cannot long continue in one good custom without deterioration. So each age has, by God's will, different aspirations, so that men may be stimulated to progress and not sink into moral stagnation.

411. Cf. Malory: “‘Comfort thyself,’ said the king, ‘and do as well as thou mayest, for in me is no trust for to trust in. For I will into the vale of Avilion to heal me of my grievous wound. And if thou hear never more of me, pray for my soul.’”

413. **May He, etc.** I pray that God may accept my work, and by taking it to Himself cleanse it from all impurities due to mortal weakness.

417. **like a fountain**, *i.e.*, continuously.

419. **That nourish a blind life, etc.**, that are blind to spiritual things. The brain of man enables him to live a two-fold life—spiritual

and material, while that of the brute qualifies it *only* for a material existence.

422. **For so,** for by prayer for one another,
every way, in every direction, everywhere.

423. **Bound by gold chains, etc.** Prayers are the gold chains that link man to God, especially prayers for the welfare of others.

427. **island-valley of Avilion:** the valley of Avalon, said to be at Glastonbury in Somersetshire, and called an island from being partially surrounded by a river. *Isle of Avalon* = Isle of Apples.

430. **Deep-meadow'd.** The depth of soil commonly denotes richness, fertility.

happy, bright, joyous-looking. Both *Deep* and *happy* are instances of metonymy.

lawns. *Lawn*, originally spelt *laund*, is now restricted in application to a smooth piece of grass-land connected with a house, but it formerly meant any open, treeless piece of grass-land.

431. **bowery hollows.** A similar term to the "*bosky dell*" and the "*bosky bourn*" of Milton's *Comus*, ll. 311-12.

crown'd: in the literal sense of "encircled," enclosed within a ring.

summer: epithet in harmony with *happy, fair*, etc.; the final touch in the description of the beauty and peace of Avalon.

432. **will:** here a principal verb denoting intention, followed by the complementary noun infinitive, *heal*.

435. **fluting:** denoting the carol is melodious.

carol: originally a dance in a ring or round, then confined to the song usually accompanying such a dance. It, *carola*, a ring-dance.

ere her death: an allusion to the popular belief, often expressed in the poets, that the swan sings once only, and that just before its death.

436. **pure cold plume:** white is poetically symbolical of purity and coldness. The comparison of the swan and the barge is mainly limited to resemblance in motion, since the barge is "dark as a funeral scarf," though perhaps its sails were white.

437. **With swarthy webs:** a touch of observation that completes the picture of the swan and its resemblance to the barge. The dark webbed feet correspond to the oars, and the pure white unfolled wings to the outspread sails.

439. **the verge of dawn:** the horizon where day was dawning

445. **From the great deep, etc.** See *Coming of Arthur*, l. 410.

446. **clomb:** the old past tense of *climb*, originally a strong verb

452. **me:** objective of exclamation.

be: are; archaic form of present indicative plural.

453. **whereat,** at whom, usually *whereat*=at which, cf. l. 446.

454. **that high day,** i.e., Arthur's coronation. See *Coming of Arthur*, ll. 275-8.

455. **friends:** in apposition with *They*.

457-61. The subject of *came* is *Sounds* (l. 460). The lines are elliptical and may be filled in thus: "it seemed that there came sounds, but (they were) faint (sounds) like the last echo born of a great cry (and) as (if they came) from beyond the limit of the world." Both *Like the last echo*, etc., and *As from beyond*, etc., modify *faint*, while *as if some fair city*, etc., modifies *there came Sounds*.

460. **were one voice:** a striking synecdoche: Bedivere hears the echo of the joyous cry of a whole city welcoming Arthur to his repose.

469. **the new sun, etc.** Arthur was born on the eve of the new year (see *Coming of Arthur*, l. 208) and his death occurs on the eve of a new year. Thus his whole life corresponds to the seasons and progress of the year.



GLOSSARY

THE COMING OF ARTHUR.

5. **petty**. Fr. *petit*, little.
17. **puissance**. Fr. = power, might.
50. **kinglihood**: *-hood*, A.S. *had*, state. A suffix used in forming abstract nouns; cf. *maidenhood*, *Godhead*.
58. **drave**: the ancient form of *drove*. A.S. *drifan*; past tense, *drat*. Cf. *Exodus* xiv. 25: "And took off their chariot-wheels that they *drave* them heavily."
66. **Colleaguings**: *-col-*, L. *cum*, with, and *leaguings*, L. *ligare*, to bind.
75. **Travail**, pangs. Both *travel* and *travail* are from Fr. *travail*, work, which came from L. *trabs*, a beam. When the Latin word passed into French, it came to denote a clog, obstacle.
82. **Vext**, harassed. L. *verare*, originally to shake, then to injure, maltreat.
102. **clarions**. Fr. *clairon*, trumpet.
119. **brands**. A.S. *brand*, fire, firebrand, but it was used in poetry to denote a sword.
130. **warded**. A.S. *weard*, guardianship. *Ward* and *guard* (Fr. *garder*, to guard) are doublets, i.e., two forms of the same word.
131. **Sware**. A.S. *swearian*, to swear, had past tense, *sweor*. The form *sware* is possibly due to the influence of such verbs as *bare*, original past tense of *bear*.
134. **foughten**. A.S. *fohtan*, to fight; past participle *fohten*.
137. **aught**. A.S. *a*, and *wiht*, thing: *a* = any, as in—
"A burnt child dreads the fire."
141. **holp**. A.S. *helpan*, to help, past tense *healp*, past participle *holpen*: *holp* is from *healp*.
180. **bestial**. L. *bestia*, a beast.
217. **Piecemeal**, piece by piece. Fr. *pièce*, part; A.S. *mael*, measure, but in plural *maelum* = manner.
252. **enow**, enough. A.S. *genow* or *genoh*: Mid. Eng. *inoh*, *enough*, *inowe*.
257. **daïs**. L. *discus*, quoit, dish, table. The platform at one end of a hall reserved for those of highest rank in the company.
261. **strait**. L. *strictus*, close, tight, drawn together. O. Fr. *estreit*.
267. **large**. L. *largus*, abundant, bountiful, generous.

274. **vert.** Fr. green.
279. **mage.** L. *magus*, a learned man, philosopher, from Persian *maj*, a priest. Cf. *Magi*, the wise men from the East.
- wit.** A.S. *witt*, understanding.
284. **samite**, a rich silk stuff interwoven or embroidered with gold. O. Fr. *samit*, Gr. *hex*, six, and *mitos*, thread.
386. **strand.** A.S. *strand*, seashore.
400. **wont**, custom. A.S. *wunian*, to be accustomed to.
405. **lea.** A.S. *leah*, a meadow.
408. **blows**, blooms. A.S. *blawan*, to bloom.
Cf. "I know a bank where the wild thyme blows."
—(*Midsommer Night's Dream*.)
- Also the phrase, a full-blown rose, i.e., in full bloom.
426. **drowsed**, became sleepy. A.S. *dreosan*, to fall, droop.
429. **phantom**, apparition, vision. Gr. *phaino*, to show.
431. **hind.** A.S. *hind*, a servant. Now a poetic term for "a farm labourer."
445. **yea.** A.S. *gea*. Yes is A.S. *gese*, a strengthened form of *gea*.
466. **doom**, fate. A.S. *dom*, judgment.
505. **yore.** A.S. *geara*, of years, genitive plural of *gear*, year.

THE PASSING OF ARTHUR.

29. **weird.** A.S. *wyrd*, fate.
82. **upheaven**, upheaved. A.S. *hebban*, to heave, past participle *hafen* or *haefen*.
92. **waste.** A.S. *weste*, from L. *vastus*, empty. Hence *vast* and *waste* are doublets.
121. **seething.** A.S. *seothan*, to boil. Now mainly a poetic term.
122. **dolorous**, mournful. L. *dolor*, grief, pain.
129. **wan.** A.S. *wann*, dark.
161. **quick**, living. A.S. *cwic*, alive.
182. **sequel**, result, consequence. L. *sequor*, to follow.
205. **mere**, a lake, a pond. A.S. *mere*, a sea, a lake.
208. **meet**, fitting, right. A.S. *metan*, to measure, which also gives us *mete*.
211. **hest**, command. A.S. *haes*, command.
225. **Myriads.** Gr. *myrios*, ten thousand, hence innumerable.
243. **fealty**: a doublet of *fidelity*. Both come from L. *fidelitas*, faithfulness.

248. **lief.** A.S. *leof*, dear, beloved.
270. **joust:** an encounter of knights in time of peace to display their prowess in arms. L. *juxta*, nigh to.
290. **widow'd,** deprived. L. *viduus*, deprived, bereft.
293. **offices,** duties. L. *officium*, duty.
305. **splendour.** L. *splendor*, lustre, brilliance.
358. **dint.** A.S. *dynt*, a blow.
365. **Black-stoled.** L. *stola*, Gr. *stolē*, a robe worn by Roman matrons reaching from neck to ankles.
377. **casque,** helmet. Sp. *casco*, a skull.
383. **cuisses,** armour for the thighs. Fr. *cuisse*, thigh, from L. *coxa*, hip.
392. **lists,** ground enclosed for a tournament. Fr. *lice*, lists; L. *liciae*, barriers.
435. **carol,** originally a dance in a ring, then confined to the song usually accompanying such a dance. It. *carola*, a ring-dance.



EXAMINATION TEST PAPERS.

THE COMING OF ARTHUR.

I. ll. 1-73.

1. Analyse lines 5-12.
2. Paraphrase lines 59-65.
3. Describe the condition of Cameliard.
4. Write short notes on Uther, Anton, Gorlois.

II. ll. 74-146.

1. Analyse lines 115-20 and 129-33.
2. Paraphrase lines 77-89.
3. Describe Arthur's battle with the barons and kings.
4. Explain—"Travail, and throes and agonies of the life;" "the long-lanced battle;" "clarions shrilling unto blood;" "Man's word is God in man."
5. Comment on—Travail, vext, clarions, brands, warded, foughten, holp.

III. ll. 147-236.

1. Analyse lines 153-8.
2. Narrate the circumstances of Arthur's birth and early life.
3. Scan lines 179, 193, 199, 213, 220, 223, and point out any peculiarities in them.
4. Explain—"The scholar ran before his master;" "I have seen the cuckoo chased by lesser fowl;" "the bright dishonour of his love."
5. Define—simile, oxymoron, metonymy, and give instances chosen from lines 147-236.

IV. ll. 237-308.

1. Analyse lines 259-65.
2. Describe the coronation scene and explain its symbolism.
3. Explain—"A doubtful throne is ice on summer seas;" "elfin Urim."
4. Comment on—enow, daïs, strait, comfortable, vert, mage, wit, samite, Excalibur.

V. ll. 309-423.

1. Analyse lines 365-76.
2. Paraphrase lines 402-10.
3. Narrate Bleys' tale of Arthur's first appearance. What is the purpose of its introduction into the poem?
4. Define—metaphor, vision, onomatopoeia, alliteration, giving examples chosen from lines 309-423.
5. Comment on—"fairy changeling;" "can walk unseen at pleasure;" "a ninth one gathering half the deep;" "in riddling triplets of old time."

VI. II. 425-518.

1. Analyse lines 452-8.
2. Narrate and explain Leodogran's dream.
3. Scan lines 427, 444, 454, 457, 483, noting any peculiarities in them.
4. Describe the marriage of Arthur and Guinevere.
5. Explain—"the fair beginners of a nobler time;" "the boundless purpose of their King;" "the slowly fading mistress of the world;" "The old order changeth, yielding place to new."

VII. GENERAL QUESTIONS.

1. Give a summary of *The Coming of Arthur*.
2. Describe the character of Arthur as outlined in *The Coming*.
3. What mention is made of Guinevere, Lancelot, Merlin?
4. Comment on the style of *The Coming*, and quote passages that illustrate its excellences.
5. Write a short essay on the ethical purpose of the poem.

THE PASSING OF ARTHUR.

I. II. 1-78.

1. Analyse lines 13-20.
2. Paraphrase lines 9-21.
3. Explain—"all my realm reels back into the beast;" "all that haunts the waste and wild;" "grosser grown than heathen;" "one lying in the dust at Almesbury."
4. Give an account of Gawain and Modred.

II. II. 79-169.

1. Analyse lines 118-27.
2. Describe the battle between Arthur and Modred.
3. Paraphrase lines 118-35.
4. Scan lines 83, 90, 91, 139, 148, 162, 168.
5. Comment on—Lyonnesse, upheaven, weird, soething, dolorous, wan.

III. II. 170-249. 1-79

1. Analyse lines 190-96.
2. Why was Excalibur to be thrown into the mere?
3. Paraphrase lines 182-9. 12-17
4. Comment on—strait, sequel, middle, mere, hest, myriads, fealty, lief.

IV. II. 250-329. 80-159

1. Analyse lines 291-300.
2. Give Bedivere's reason for hiding Excalibur the second time.
3. Define and illustrate—personification, simile, vision.
4. Comment on—chased, joust, conceit, widow'd, wheel'd, dipt the surface.

191-201 Y. ll. 330-469. 160-299

1. Analyse lines 361-71.
2. Paraphrase lines 408-21. 239-251
3. Describe Arthur's appearance as he lay in the barge.
4. Comment on—"three queens with crowns of gold;" "which was an image of the mighty world;" "the island valley of Avilion;" "from the great deep to the great deep he goes."
5. Explain—black-stoled, "that shiver'd to the tingling stars," casque, greaves, cuisses, "fluting a wild carol ere her death."

VI. GENERAL QUESTIONS.

1. Contrast the Arthur of *The Passing* with the Arthur of *The Coming*.
2. Describe the character of Bedivere.
3. What is the hope that consoles Arthur for the failure of his work?
4. Summarise the *Passing of Arthur*.
5. Comment on the style of *The Passing* and quote passages to illustrate Tennyson's mastery of metre.

MISCELLANEOUS.

1. Write a short life of Tennyson.
2. What was the work done by Geoffrey of Monmouth and Sir Thomas Malory in connection with the Arthurian story?
3. How far is Tennyson indebted to, and in what does he differ from Malory?
4. Outline the allegory of the *Idylls*.
5. Discuss the question whether the *Idylls* can be called an Epic of Arthur.
6. Describe fully the metre of the *Idylls*.



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